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THE LIFE OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU

Henry David Thoreau

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American Writers Series

THE LIFE OF
HENRY DAVID THOREAU

INCLUDING MANY ESSAYS HITHERTO
UNPUBLISHED
AND SOME ACCOUNT OF HIS
FAMILY AND FRIENDS

BY

F. B. SANBORN

With Illustrations

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PREFACE

A FINAL Life of Thoreau from my hand has this peculiar claim on the reader's attention, that it includes memoirs of his ancestors not before given to the public; and also, in their complete form, many essays written in his early youth, — all that the care of his kindred had preserved, — besides what escaped from their research, verses, letters, and memoranda. Other letters and fragments may come to light; but so careful has been the search (and the price paid for his manuscripts so high, though he was much neglected in his lifetime), that few can be now in existence, outside of well-known collections. Their stores have mostly passed through my hands for editing or for examination.

Important single finds, exclusive of fragmentary or perfect Journals, now printed, were an essay of 1840, *The Service*, from the portfolio of Emerson, (here mainly included); a lecture of 1843 on Sir Walter Raleigh, meant for the *Dial;* and the Notes of his Western journey of 1861, of which no copy was made until I edited it for the Boston Bibliophile Society in 1905. The *Raleigh* had before been

printed by this Society; both were from the manuscripts of Mr. Bixby, bought of Mr. Russell, to whom they came by bequest from Mr. Blake, to whom Miss Thoreau gave them. From the *Walden* manuscripts in Mr. Bixby's hands I made many additions to the original printed book, published in 1854, when I edited the two volumes of *Walden* for the Bibliophile Society in 1909, with elucidating notes and some rearrangement of the text.

Such insertions and notes, with passages and prefaces in other volumes, privately printed, or now out of print, have been freely used by me here; being mostly the fruit of my long research in the writings of Ellery Channing and Thoreau, and of my ten years' intimacy with him and his family. My acquaintance with his sister Sophia lasted for ten years more; but I never saw her after 1875, though I occupied her house until it was sold to Louisa Alcott in 1877. Her aunt, Maria Thoreau, last of the name in America, died at Bangor in 1881. Her known ancestors were wholly English and Scotch; but on Henry's mother's side was a New England ancestry, — Joneses of Weston and Dunbars of Bridgewater, —whose collegiate and political history was so peculiar and so little known, even to the Thoreaus, that I here tell it at some length in my first chapter, and in an Appendix.

The research of Thoreau himself in those departments of nature, life, and literature which he chose to investigate in his comparatively short life, was diligent, strenuous, and productive. His own library was small, and I here print its catalogue for the first time, in the Appendix; and also a scheme of readings either for himself, or for some young man under his direction, which I have good reason for thinking he had himself taken, as early, at least, as the year 1847, when he left his study in Walden Woods, to take charge of the hospitalities of his friend Emerson's household, while Emerson was making his second visit to Europe in 1847–48. The readings of both these friends, and of their late survivor Ellery Channing, were much more extended and discursive than most of their biographers and critics have known or usually suspected. Their published Journals disclose this fact, to the surprise of several hasty critics. The importation of rare volumes made by Mr. Alcott, Mr. Lane, and Mr. Cholmondeley in the period from 1840 to 1855, together with Theodore Parker's and George Ripley's extensive studies, put the Concord Authors in communication with many important authors not generally read by their contemporaries.

This being so, it is strange that Thoreau, so far

as we can learn by an inspection of his manuscripts, as well as his publications, never came in contact with the travels and researches of that earlier Poet-Naturalist of the Eighteenth Century, commonly known as Hector St. John, but entitled from his birth to the baptismal name of Michel-Guillaume St. Jean de Crèvecœur, which he used in his later life, when he appeared on the stage of European and international affairs. Like the Thoreau family, these St. Johns were subjects of the ancient Duchy of Normandy, which became for some centuries connected with the Crown of England, — the Thoreaus in the Channel Islands, the St. Johns on the coast of Lower Normandy. Like the Thoreaus, too, the St. Johns took to wandering, — at least in the branch that settled in England, — and sent offshoots to Massachusetts and Connecticut, of whom in England were Cromwell's Solicitor-General, Oliver St. John, and Pope's brilliant friend Henry St. John, the politician Bolingbroke, and in New England the Bulkeleys and Emersons of Concord and Connecticut. Thoreau's friend and early patron, Waldo Emerson, seems to have been a fifth cousin of the uneasy and immoral politician of Queen Anne's time, Henry St. John, to whom Pope dedicated his *Essay on Man.* The St. John family remaining

in Normandy, to which Hector St. John belonged, was probably distantly related to that branch of it which had crossed over into England, and from England had migrated to America. And it was singular that the same love and close observation of external nature, the same admiration for the American Indians, with far greater facilities for studying and living their mode of life, and a similar turn of expression in literature, should have existed in the American Colonies, and inscribed itself in half a dozen French volumes, before the American Thoreaus, in 1801, had settled themselves in Concord, which they were to aid in making famous.

For it now appears that a considerable part of the present fame of Concord in literature grows out of the life and writings of Henry Thoreau, whose writings had little circulation before his death in 1862. Almost every page of his manuscript, of which he left enough to fill at least twenty-five volumes, has now been searched out and printed, — some of it over and over, — and something of it has been translated into the languages of Europe. Selections from these volumes now make part of the courses of instruction in the secondary schools and colleges of the United States; and his haunts in and near Concord have

been carefully traced out and pictured in sketches and photographs, to the number of several hundred. The same is true of his wanderings by the Atlantic seashore, and in the mountains and forests, and along the rivers of New England. As many pilgrims come, from all directions, to follow his well-described paths and visit his grave, as now frequent the haunts of any of the Concord authors, except of Louisa Alcott, who still continues to be more widely read than any one of her famous contemporaries in the town where they are buried.

This constant growth for more than half a century, since his death in May, 1862, has finally called forth from my portfolios his earlier writings (chiefly college essays), where they have lain since I made some use of them in my first biography of Thoreau, published in 1882, just before the death of Emerson, who had already edited a volume of his friend's Letters and Poems in 1865, and had strongly urged the publication of his Journals in full, which has been done.

It might be a question whether these Journals should not have been *edited,* at least so far as to bring together those entries which manifestly concern the same or similar subjects; for that was his own manner of editing, when he drew from the

same Journals the material of his two volumes, — the *Week* and *Walden*, — and his numerous detached magazine articles and essays, which were collected into volumes after his death. Why these entries were not better classified in the completed Journals is rather puzzling; for it was sometimes months before the final transfer was made from the notebook to the bound Journal volume. Thoreau was a person of mercantile method, and had little of the erratic moods of his friend Channing, or of the temporary incapacities of Emerson to give expression to his higher thought. All three had certain peculiarities, which Emerson frankly styled "whim," and this was true also of Alcott, whose power of original thought was by no means equally mated with a power of written expression. In Alcott's case, the defect was heightened by the fact that in conversation he was often most felicitous in the choice and collocation of words.

Except in periods of extreme physical weakness, as in his last illness, Thoreau seemed always ready to express himself, up to the limit of his most subtile and delicate thought; though he was as scrupulous as Emerson (and as Channing was unscrupulous) about the form in which his thought should be presented to the world in print. No author

whose manuscripts have ever come before me, in a long career of editing and commenting, was so constant and insistent in revising what he had written; so that some of his manuscripts are from correction practically illegible. But in spite of a certain hesitation of manner, — which was long regarded as an affectation or an imitation, conscious or unconscious, of Emerson's manner, — Thoreau, like Emerson, was ever ready in conversation. Channing pictured him as "with prominent lips, pursed up with meaning and thought when silent, and giving out when open a stream of the most varied and unusual and instructive sayings." I can testify to this from half a dozen years of daily and intimate conversation, on a thousand topics. The early papers here collected and printed in full are noteworthy from the same felicity in expression, the same vigor and independence of thought, and a similar quaintness of humor, so perceptible in his finished and published writings, long since given to the world. The love of paradox, very noticeable in *The Service*, and much of his early published writing, and very irritating to some of his critics, is perceptible in a few of the college essays, where he was sometimes defending opinions that his topic required him to hold, but which were not really his own. The

paradox, however, was actually an intermediate phase of his style, growing out of the general exaltation of the early New England Transcendentalists, and showed itself in Emerson in the form of hyperbole, which adhered to him from first to last, and has given rise to some unfounded views of Thoreau's character as portrayed by Emerson.

As with all original authors, Thoreau is best read, not in the comments and guesses of others, — especially of the professorial or pedantic class, in its younger specimens, — but in his own pages. Something, not easily to be defined, passes from himself to his readers, which differentiates Thoreau from the mass of naturalists, and even from poet-naturalists of another training, such as Hector St. John. The flavor of the genuine, unmistakable Thoreau is found in his writings, — serious, yet suffused with humor; mystical, yet not religious in your fashion or mine; full of the most sensitive and loyal spirit of friendship, yet also a little cold and pugnacious, and only intelligible from his own point of view. Yet in his effect on the reader he warrants that eulogy and that discrimination which led Montaigne to say of his friend, too early lost, Etienne de la Boëtie, that he valued what he said and did because it was Etienne and not another friend who said it or

who did it. There are many writers on Nature, but there is only one Thoreau; many Stoics, ancient and modern, but only this one affectionate Stoic since Marcus Aurelius.

F. B. Sanborn.

Concord, *January* 3, 1917.

Mr. Sanborn died February 24, 1917, before the publication of this book; but he had read all the proof and had planned in part the list of illustrations. In a letter to the Publishers dated January 15, 1917, he had expressed the intention of making somewhere in the book a brief statement of his method of dealing with quoted matter. This statement had apparently been left for insertion in the revised proof of the Preface, which, unfortunately, was dispatched to him only on the very day of his death. It remains for the Publishers, therefore, to carry out the author's intention.

Mr. Sanborn was not a slavish quoter, and in dealing with Thoreau's Journals and those other of his writings which Thoreau himself had not prepared for publication, he used the privilege of an editor who is thoroughly familiar with his author's subjects and habits of thought to rearrange para-

graphs, to omit here, to make slight interpolations there, and otherwise to treat the rough and unpolished sentences of the Journals, letters, etc., much as it may be supposed the author himself would have treated them had he prepared them for the press. If, therefore, the reader finds occasional discrepancies between the extracts from Thoreau's Journals as here given and the forms in which the same passages appear in the scrupulously exact transcript contained in the published *Journal*, he is not to set them down to carelessness, but is rather to thank Mr. Sanborn for making these passages more orderly and more readable.

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The photographs of John Thoreau, Helen Thoreau, and Louisa Dunbar were kindly furnished by Mr. Edwin B. Hill, of Mesa, Arizona. Those of Mrs. and Miss Ward, as well as that of Thomas Cholmondeley, are reproduced through the courtesy of Mr. Herbert W. Hosmer, of Concord.

THE LIFE OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU

THE LIFE OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU

CHAPTER I

ANCESTRY AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS

In January, 1874, meeting my neighbor and friend Emerson at the Social Circle of Concord (a club of twenty-five townsmen, in all occupations), of which he had been a member for more than thirty years, and I, then and afterwards for more than thirty, — neither Alcott, Hawthorne, Thoreau, nor Ellery Channing were ever members, — our talk fell upon Henry Thoreau. He had been dead for nearly twelve years, but his "Life" had recently been published by his intimate comrade, Channing. Emerson spoke of him as "a person not accounted for by anything in his antecedents, his birth, his education, or his way of life." Something like this was said by Clarendon, of Sir Henry Vane; and that remark, in Thoreau's case, has long put me upon inquiry as to the sources of his genius and character, which led him, as Emerson said, "to say and write such sur-

prising things." We must believe that most of our traits come to us, modified and combined, from the long procession of our ancestors; until such time as our own free will has changed and remodelled our mental structure, under inspiration from divine sources, — in which both Thoreau and Emerson had implicit faith. I therefore seek in this chapter to trace farther than has yet been done the ancestral origins of this extraordinary denizen of the village and the woodlands of his native township, — in which, however, his family had been resident less than a quarter-century when Henry was born there, July 12, 1817.

Strange mistakes have been made on this subject, — one historian of American literature having told his readers that Thoreau was born "of farmer folk, a Connecticut family, recently emigrated from France." But no ancestor of his ever lived in Connecticut; while the latest of them to emigrate from France (if any did) must have lived there before the Tudors reigned in England. The Thoreaus of Jersey, when we first hear of them (about 1725), were merchants in St. Helier, the capital of Jersey, a Channel Island between France and England, formerly attached to the Duchy of Normandy. Its community is of great antiquity, where, until lately, English was a for-

eign tongue. When the Angevin kings of England gave up Normandy, Jersey went with England, only now and then yielding to French control. Its language continued to be Norman-French, which still is the official dialect of its courts, as it long was in England.

No Thoreaus by that name remain now in Jersey, the last, Philippe Thoreau, having emigrated to New Zealand in 1876, where the family name is probably kept up. It was brought to Boston in 1773, by John Thoreau, a seaman, one of the three sons of Maître Philippe Thoreau, who in or about 1720 was born at St. Helier, the son of a wine-merchant, and carried on the family business. His wife, Marie Le Galais, born in 1723, and married in 1749, outlived her husband and two of her three sons, dying at St. Helier, June 26, 1801, a few months after her son John Thoreau had died in Concord. She had six daughters, several of whom married in England, by the names of Pinkney, Le Cappelain, etc. Her son Peter Thoreau died about 1810, leaving two children, Elizabeth and Peter. This young Peter (born in 1790, died in 1867) left a son who in 1896 was employed in the Oxford University Press, and a daughter who married in Jersey a Mr. Du Parc, and may be still living there. Her uncle Philippe, dying in 1800,

left two sons and a daughter, both married in 1801 and with children, "living in a good way," but in Grouville, not far from St. Helier. Of Peter's nephews in England, one, John, was in 1806 a lieutenant in the British army, and had been in a campaign on the Continent; "he is very fond of a soldier's life."

It will thus be seen that the Jersey ancestors were respectable middle-class people, well educated, and rising in the social scale. John, who migrated, was a seaman, — also a respectable employment in Jersey, — and came to Boston in the hope of making his fortune. At first he found Boston in difficulties. The Stamp Act had been passed and repealed, but other taxes were levied by Parliament, and Boston had nullified the tea-tax by throwing a cargo of the herb overboard in Boston Harbor. In consequence, the Boston Port Bill was passed, and the trade of the town embargoed. John Thoreau, then working in a sail loft or some other outfitting shop, was thrown out of work, and took to the sea (it is thought, as a privateersman). During the Revolution he prospered in privateering and commerce, and in 1781 married Jane Burns, the daughter of a Scotch emigrant from Stirling, who had married in Boston Sarah, the daughter of a Quaker, David

Orrok, and of a Hannah Tillet, who may have been of Huguenot descent, like the Bowdoins. John and Jane Thoreau had a good house in Prince Street, and the partners, Thoreau and Hayse, a shop on Long Wharf, where my mother's uncle, Levi Melcher, was one of their clerks. John Thoreau had been one of nine children; by his marriage with Miss Burns he had eight sons and daughters, all of whom survived him. Only two of the eight married, however, — John, the father of Henry, and Elizabeth, who married a Mr. Billings, and removed to Maine. John Thoreau had four children, none of whom married; and John's brother David, named for the Quaker grandfather, died just after coming of age.

On the maternal side Henry Thoreau had ancestors more prolific and even more adventurous than the seafaring and migrating Thoreaus. Cynthia Dunbar, the youngest child of Asa Dunbar and Mary Jones, was born in 1787, a few months after her father's death, at Keene, New Hampshire, where the family had lived less than ten years. Her mother was one of the fifteen children of Colonel Elisha Jones, of Weston, near Concord, and the only daughter among them. Twelve of the sons lived to grow up, and eight of them were banished from the United States and

had their considerable property confiscated, for joining the mother country in her effort to conquer the revolted Colonies. Colonel Jones himself escaped banishment only by death, but his estate in Weston was also confiscated, after some delay. He had taken refuge with the British garrison in Boston in 1775, and died and was buried there in January, 1776. His daughter Mary had married, in 1772, Rev. Asa Dunbar, a graduate in 1767 of Harvard College, and was "settled" as pastor of a Congregational church in Salem at the time of marriage. On the removal of her father to Boston in 1775, Mrs. Dunbar returned to Colonel Jones's fine house in Weston, to care for her mother, and to keep house for her brothers, and there her husband seems to have resided while preaching in Salem.

Asa Dunbar had thrilling experiences before marriage. In 1766, while a Junior at college, he had headed a rebellion there which for a time threatened to paralyze President Holyoke's institution, over which he ruled with so much dignity. No very full account of this affair has been printed of late years; but some ten years ago some manuscripts of the Weeks family, of Greenland, New Hampshire, came into the hands of Mr. Goodspeed, who allowed me to copy them before they were sold to Harvard University. They detailed

MARY (JONES) DUNBAR

in a humorous vein, but with attention to the main facts, the origin, progress, and adjustment of this serious affair. It had two causes, unsatisfactory food at the college commons, and misuse of special privileges by students.

The troubles began early in the autumn of 1766, when Dunbar's class of between forty and fifty had just entered on its Senior year. A new severity in the offence of absence from morning prayers had been decreed by the Faculty. The time-honored excuse, "*detentus a nuncio paterno*" ("a message from my father"), being no longer received, punishment followed. Dunbar, Senior Sophister, took the lead in demanding better fare, going to the college steward, Belcher Hancock, and renewing a former request for better food, — especially stigmatizing the daily butter. He was refused and threatened with expulsion by Hancock, who was one of the few tutors. The students of the four classes (numbering in all but one hundred and sixty) then held a general meeting (September 23, 1766) and voted that they would "resent it in a proper manner" should Dunbar be sent away. In the "*nuncio paterno*" grievance, they further voted that they would leave Holden Chapel in a body, before the "weekly bill" was read, unless their wrongs were redressed. This

they did, with much noise, and there was even talk of withdrawing wholly from college. The trouble lasted a week or two; but Dr. Holyoke was more reasonable than young George III, and yielded to a *modus vivendi*. Dunbar's action was wholly to his credit. He wrote the manifesto put forth by the whole student body, justifying their action, and was one of the four Seniors to sign it, the others being Thomas Bernard, son of the royal Governor of Massachusetts and afterwards Sir Thomas, Isaac Smith, and Zephaniah Briggs. It was also signed by David Green (1768), Stephen Peabody, who married a sister of John Adams (1769), and George Cabot, Freshman. Cabot never graduated, but had an honorary degree in 1779. He was afterward the eminent Federalist politician of Boston, Senator under Washington, friend of Hamilton, and president of the Hartford Convention. Possibly the presence of Governor Bernard's son in the offending class of 1767 may have had much to do with the forgiveness of the offenders, as President Quincy hints in his brief notice of this greatest of the Harvard rebellions. It gave Dunbar a high standing among the alumni, and doubtless favored his early ordination at Salem, and his marriage with the daughter of Colonel Jones in 1772.

The Colonel owned two slaves and much land in Massachusetts and Maine; had for ten years represented Weston in the Provincial Assembly, and in January, 1774, had prevented his town from adopting the plan for Committees of Correspondence and a Continental Congress, — sure preliminaries of the Revolution. In May he was chosen, as usual, to the Assembly, then called to meet in Boston. This was his last glimmer of popularity; in September, 1774, his patriotic rival, Bradyll Smith, represented Weston in the Assembly at Salem, where Parson Dunbar was preaching; and Colonel Jones soon took shelter in Boston, where General Gage made him Forage Commissioner, as will be noticed presently.

Intermarriage with so loyal a family naturally brought Dunbar under suspicion by the Adamses and other patriotic leaders; and he was obliged once or twice to declare his respect for the American cause, in public. When hostilities began at Lexington, his brothers-in-law took sides with the King's troops, and one of them showed Earl Percy how to find the short way to Lexington, to reinforce the regulars fleeing from their ill-advised excursion to Concord. Another brother, Dr. Josiah Jones, came home to Weston from New Hampshire, where he was practising medicine at

Hinsdale, and reported himself for the King's service in Boston. His father at once made him supercargo of a captured sloop from the Maine coast (the Polly) returning from Plymouth to Arundel, but carried as a prize into Boston. "Being solicited by Admiral Graves's secretary," said the ingenuous skipper Smith, "to enter His Majesty's service, and knowing no other way wherein I could possibly make my escape, I entered into said service, to go to Windsor in Nova Scotia for hay and other things." In an evil hour for Dr. Jones and his friend Dr. Hicks, from the region of Plymouth, they went on board the Polly to purchase her intended freight in the loyal Colony of Nova Scotia. "I desired the captain of our convoy," says the shrewd skipper, "leave to sail; but he told me I was not to sail till to-morrow at 10 o'clock, as there was a number of other vessels in the same employ, and should all sail together. I then desired leave of Mr. Jones to haul off into the Road, and obtained leave. It being dark, as I had got consent of our Factor to sail, I embraced the opportunity, and immediately sailed for Arundel,[1] where I arrived in about twenty-four hours, and delivered up Mr. Jones and one Jonathan Hicks."

[1] Now Kennebunkport.

By this time it was June 2, Skipper Smith had forfeited one hundred and eighty dollars, but had saved his Polly, and captured two Tories, whom he at once turned over to the Committee of Safety. This Committee, the next day, June 3, reported the case to Sam Adams's Provincial Congress, in session at Watertown, near Weston, adding: —

> A number of the King's Arms, with cartridges, were put on board and two young men, one named Josiah Jones, and the other Jona. Hicks, were put on board at Boston, — one or both as supercargo, with a packet of letters, orders and other papers.

By June 10, the youths with their papers were before a Committee of the Watertown Congress, which at once voted: —

> That Josiah Jones, taken from the sloop Polly, be sent with a sufficient guard to the Town of Concord, and committed to the common Gaol, there to remain until the further order of Congress or House of Representatives of this Colony.

Further orders were not found necessary. Mary Dunbar had taken the case into her consideration — driving over the seven miles between her father's house and the wooden prison at Concord, she carried to her brother and his companion

palatable food, in which files were concealed, with which the young rogues cut away the prison bars, and escaped by night to Colonel Jones's cider-mill, where Black Cicero reported them early the next morning. Capturing a neighbor's horse in one of the great pastures of Weston, Mrs. Dunbar had him harnessed into one of the Jones chaises, in which the captives made their way to Falmouth (now Portland) and there, being supplied with money at Weston, they made their way to the home of Nathan Jones, a son of the Colonel, in Gouldsborough, and from there to the loyal colonies.

This took place some time after the battle of Bunker Hill, — for on that day Mrs. Dunbar, as she said afterward, carried a basket of cherries (with more files, no doubt) to her brother in bonds; and her husband, seeking to drive across from Weston to Salem to preach there, found the intervening country so disturbed by the movement of troops that he was fain to return to Weston. Nathan Jones in Maine was so strongly suspected of Toryism that he had much difficulty in keeping out of prison, but remained nominally American, and died a citizen of the United States. Stephen Jones, who joined the British army on the day of the Concord Fight, was the

one who guided Lord Percy. Simeon, who had been the clerk of his brother Daniel's court at Hinsdale, was imprisoned in Concord jail for aiding his brother Josiah to escape, but himself escaped in 1777, while Sir Archibald Campbell was himself a prisoner there, before his exchange for Colonel Ethan Allen, who had been captured in Canada, in 1776. Stephen afterwards served in the Royal American Dragoons under Colonel Thompson (afterward Sir Benjamin Thompson and Count Rumford), under whose command he fought in South Carolina against Marion and his men by the Santee River.

The Concord prison in which these brothers of Mrs. Dunbar were confined, and from which they escaped, was not that stone jail in which Henry Thoreau afterwards spent a night, and with which Bronson Alcott was threatened two years earlier. The older jail was of wood, and a clerk of Sir Archibald Campbell, who was long a prisoner there, made a sketch of it, which has long hung in the Town Library of Concord. It stood on the main street in the midst of the village, near the oldest cemetery, and nearly opposite the present library. The family tradition concerning these imprisonments was written down by Henry in one of the Journals before 1846, since destroyed.

It runs thus, defective and erroneous in some points, but worth preserving here: —

My mother's grandfather, Colonel Elisha Jones, was the owner and inhabitant of an estate in Weston, before the Revolution. He was a man of standing and influence among his neighbors, but was a Tory. He had fourteen sons and one daughter, — namely, Nathan, Daniel, Ephraim, Israel, Elias, Josiah, Simeon, Mary (eighth child), Stephen, Charles, Edward, Silas, Philemon and Jonas. Simeon was confined in Concord Jail four months and a fortnight. [Query, nine months?] His sister brought every meal he had from Weston; he was afraid he might be poisoned else. On the 17th of June, 1775, she brought over ripe cherries in her chaise. There was one Hicks, and one more, imprisoned with him. They secreted knives furnished them with their food, sawed the grates off and escaped to Weston. Hid in the cider-mill. Mary heard they were in the mill; was frightened because somebody had told her there were two or three blackbirds hid that day somewhere. She met Cicero (?) who did not know her; took old Baldwin's (the sheriff's who took up Simeon Jones) horse from the lower part of Weston. Simeon went to Portland with him, and pawned him for two bushels of potatoes; then wrote back to Baldwin where he'd find his horse, by paying charges.

What is here said of Simeon, who was not arrested till his brother Josiah had escaped, was true of Josiah and Dr. Hicks; and it is scarcely

probable that Simeon escaped in the same way they did. Perhaps he was aided to get away by Sir Archibald Campbell, who had certain privileges due to his rank as member of Parliament and Colonel of a Scotch regiment, and did occasionally dine at the neighboring house of Captain Duncan Ingraham, a friend of Colonel Jones, and, like him, a loyalist. The tradition was noted down from the narration of Thoreau's mother, aunts, or grandmother, and suffered the inaccuracies of oral tradition. It was not from dread of poison, but because the prison-fare was meagre, as Sir Archibald complained, that Mrs. Dunbar carried food from her mother's ample table.[1]

[1] The fine old mansion of Colonel Jones, where Mrs. Dunbar and her husband resided in 1775–76, is still standing in Weston in good condition, but removed from the estate, which was confiscated with it after the Peace of 1783. It is now in the village, and is the summer residence of Mr. Charles Fiske, a nephew of Mrs. Ripley, of the Old Manse. The land was the property of General Charles Paine, a veteran of the Civil War, who sold the house to Mr. Fiske for removal. In a meadow of the Jones estate, some twenty years ago, Mr. Alfred Hosmer, of Concord, found the English cuckoo-plant, often mentioned by Shakespeare, growing wild, as it now does in Concord. Apparently it was brought over to the Jones garden, whence it escaped into the meadow.

In this house of the Joneses, Rev. Asa Dunbar, in September, 1775, wrote and published at Cambridge, in a patriotic weekly, an explanation of his clerical conduct on the occasion of a solemn Fast proclaimed by the Philadelphia Congress, and ordered by the Massachusetts Legislature. It was addressed to the Weston Committee of Safety, who "receive it as satisfactory, and think it

Cicero was one of Colonel Jones's black slaves, and probably was in the secret. The cider-mill was at some distance from the house, and in that season not frequented. Thoreau went on with his record: —

All but three of the sons of Colonel Jones went abroad, — to England, Canada, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Maine. Four settled in one town, Sissiboo, now called Weymouth, in Nova Scotia, — Simeon, Josiah, Elisha, and Stephen, — Nathan, the eldest son, to Gouldsborough on Frenchman's Bay in Maine.

A fuller statement of the location of these brothers will be found in the Appendix. Charles had died in Virginia during the war, probably in one of the British regiments invading there. Jonas, the thirteenth son, being an officer in the British army, went with his regiment to England and died there.

The fortunes of Asa Dunbar as parson, counsellor at law, patriot, and Freemason need to be

ought to release him from any unfavorable suspicions that have arisen to his disadvantage." This paper and his Masonic oration at Lancaster will be quoted later. He never returned to his pulpit, but studied law with a friend, Joshua Atherton, who settled in New Hampshire, and Dunbar himself practised law in Keene, New Hampshire, where he died in 1787, a few months before the birth of his daughter, afterwards Mrs. Thoreau.

The mother of Mrs. Dunbar, Mrs. Colonel Jones of Weston, died at Mrs. Dunbar's house in Keene.

exposed a little farther, since he so soon vanishes from his family record, at the age of little more than forty. His connection with the college rebellion which first brought him into notice in good company, has been preserved for us, in some detail, by Clement Weeks, a youth of eighteen, son of a rich farmer in Greenland, New Hampshire, who entered Harvard in 1768, and graduated in 1772. His college notebook, partly humorous and partly serious, has come down to President Lowell's time; and discloses the confession of the students and the agreement with the Faculty, in which President Holyoke showed unexpected leniency to the active offenders. In 1772, after studying divinity for several years, Dunbar became the colleague of Rev. Thomas Barnard at Salem and the husband of Mary Jones; living with her, an only daughter, at the mansion of Colonel Jones. As the inmate of a Tory household he had a difficult part to play. Most of his Salem parishioners were patriots; his wife was keeping house for her father and his English guests at Weston, twenty-five miles off. John Hancock, a proscribed patriot, was presiding over a Continental Congress in Philadelphia, and was treasurer of Harvard College, of which Dr. Langdon, a patriotic scholar and preacher, had become President; while Samuel

Adams had a Provincial Congress in session at Watertown, which had sent Dunbar's brother-in-law Josiah to Concord jail, and his wife was supplying him with means of escape. In the April previous, Hancock's Congress had ordered a Colonial Fast for July 20, and Adams's Congress had insisted that it be rigidly observed in Massachusetts. In some way or other, either at Salem or in Weston, Dunbar had given offence to patriots in his town, and the Weston Committee had called him to account. He therefore sent this note to the Committee of Weston, and published it in the "Essex Gazette," issued from the college buildings in Cambridge: —

Having been acquainted by the Gentlemen, the Committee of Correspondence in Weston, with some uneasiness arising in the minds of the people, from the conduct of myself and family upon Fast day, the 20th of last July; and having a desire to live in good fellowship with every friend of American liberty, I beg leave publicly to declare that the part I bore in those transactions that gave offence was dictated solely by the principles of religion and humanity, with no design of displeasing any one: and that I am sorry it was, in the eyes of *one* of my countrymen attended with any disgusting circumstances. . . . As it has been suspected that I despised the Day, and the authority that appointed it, I must, in justice to myself, and

from the love of truth, affirm, that I very highly respect and revere that authority; and, were it not from the appearance of boasting, could add, that I believe no person observed it with greater sincerity than

ASA DUNBAR.

WESTON, *September* 8, 1775.

We are left in doubt what his conduct had been, — possibly praying that King George might have that wisdom he so much needed, — or praying for those in prison, among whom was his wife's brother Josiah (not Simeon, who did not get there till later). He did pray for King George and the royal family in 1774, and afterward gave thanks for American victories. Josiah remained in bonds four months at least, or until October; and Simeon, perchance, for nine. Meanwhile, the parson was managing the farm of Colonel Jones (for a time on his widow's "thirds," as John Thoreau managed his mother-in-law's in Concord, fifty years later); and was driving the Jones cattle to their pasture in Princeton, through Lancaster, where the Masonic lodge was. His health was not good, and he had retired from his Salem pulpit, which he finally gave up in 1779, when the parish voted him seven hundred pounds, lawful money, to end their pecuniary contract, but in paper money at much discount. He was studying law, and was an

active Freemason in that year; and he came down to Lancaster from Keene in June, 1781, to give a fervid Masonic address, which has been twice printed, and offers a favorable view of his heart and of his style. He founded a sister lodge in Keene, which met at his house, and seems to have involved him in some debts. There he had law students, and was a social favorite, apparently, as his family were after his death. They had Dunbar relatives in Keene, one of whom, Mrs. Ralston, spoke of Cynthia in her youth, as a handsome, dark-eyed girl, singing with a sweet voice. Her gift in conversation was well known in most of the village homes of Concord.

Mary Jones (Mrs. Dunbar) was born in 1748, the ninth child of the Jones fifteen; but one of her elder brothers had died in childhood so that she was practically the eighth, as her grandson said. She lived until 1830, when Henry was in his fourteenth year, and he remembered her well. He was born in the house of her second husband, Captain Jonas Minot of Concord, of whom and her his Journal had stories to tell. In 1795, before she married Minot, she took her children from Keene and went on a visit to her brothers in Maine and the British Provinces, of which journey Henry had this to record: —

With her three daughters, Sophia, aged fourteen, Louisa ten, and Cynthia eight, — health failing, — she went to visit her brother Nathan at Frenchman's Bay, and her four brothers at Sissiboo afterward. They took passage in the Fall of 1795 in a ninety-ton wood-sloop, with a crew of three men besides the captain. They went at random down from Boston; the hands said they had touched every rock between Boston and Goldsborough, — the sloop going down empty. [She brought firewood from Maine to Boston.]

Coming up she had all her sails blown away (not seaworthy); then had fallen down into the stream to bend on her new sails. The Dunbars were put on board Saturday afternoon, by a boat; found her down the stream. Sunday was fine weather, but they were all sick; were all in their berths at midnight, Sunday, when they struck on Matinicus Rock. "All hands on deck!" The water came in so fast as to wet Mrs. Dunbar before they got up on deck. She exclaimed, "Captain, where are we?" "God Almighty alone knows, for I do not," said he, who was pulling a rope.

Out of this danger they safely came back to Keene, where, and in Concord, Mrs. Dunbar survived most of her brothers. Elias married a daughter of Sheriff Baldwin, whose wife was a Jones, — which may account for the use of the Baldwin horse in the escape to Maine. Josiah had become a commissary in the British service. Stephen, Simeon, and Jonas also fought against

their countrymen. Jonas continued in the army, married an heiress, Miss Mason, in England, and died there. Simeon married a Miss Williams, of Roxbury, a distant cousin; for the fighting Williamses of Berkshire were cousins of Colonel Jones. Ephraim Williams was a first cousin — he for whom Williamstown and Williams College were named, and who was killed at the battle of Lake George in 1757. Charles Jones, who was in Harvard College when the Revolution broke out, and who died early, was remembered by Mrs. Dunbar in the name of her only son, Charles, the first child who survived, though not born till 1780, after his parents had left Salem and Weston, which was their occasional home until 1779, when they went to Keene.

The result of the choice of sides in the contest, by Colonel Jones and his sons, was their exile, and the confiscation of their property, except that of the four brothers, Nathan, Daniel, Isaac, and Elias, who remained in the United States — Daniel becoming a lawyer of some note at Hinsdale near Keene. Simeon was named by Daniel as the clerk of his law-court, and Josiah went to Hinsdale to practise medicine. After his banishment he changed his profession to the law, became a judge in Nova Scotia, and died at Annapolis,

not far from Weymouth. The effect of the Revolution was to impoverish this once prosperous family, wherever they might reside. But they never lost their social respectability.

Frenchman's Bay, where their risky voyage to Boston began for Mary Jones and her daughters, is formed by the long peninsula of Gouldsborough on one side, and by Mount Desert Island on the other, which had been granted by his Province of Massachusetts to Sir Francis Bernard, father of Sir Thomas, Dunbar's classmate at Harvard. Matinicus, where they ran aground, is an island nearer Boston, at the entrance of Frenchman's Bay. Not long after this hazardous voyage Mrs. Dunbar married Jonas Minot, in whose farmhouse, twenty years later, Henry Thoreau was born, at the lowest stage of the fortunes of his parents. During his period of prosperity, Captain Minot had owned much wild land in New Hampshire. On one occasion he and his wife visited this property, in the present town of Wilmot; an excursion that Thoreau described in his Journal, perhaps from his uncle Charles Dunbar's account, — losing nothing by either narrator: —

I have been told (a tradition in our family) that when my Grandmother with her second husband, the Captain, first went into Kearsarge Gore in her chaise,

— where, by the way, the inhabitants baked a pig in expectation of their coming, which, as they did not come immediately, was kept baking for three days, — her chaise so frightened the geese in the road that they actually rose and flew half a mile. And the sheep all ran over the hills, with the pigs after them; and some of the horses they met broke their tackling or threw their riders; so that they had to put their chaise down several times, to save life.

When they drove up to the (Baptist) meeting-house, snap, snap went the bridles of several of the horses that were tied there, and they scattered without a benediction. Though it was in the middle of sermon-time, the whole congregation rushed out, "for they thought it was a leather judgment a-comin'." The people about the door got hold of and got into the vehicle, so that "they liked to have shaken it all to pieces" with curiosity. The minister's wife got in, too, and "tetered up and down a little"; but she thought it was "a darn tottlish thing," and said she "would n't ride in it for nothin' in the world." There was no service in the afternoon.

The next day some old women took their knitting-work and sat in the chaise. As my Grandfather had a lawsuit with a "witch-woman" there, the people prophesied that she would upset his chaise, till they remembered that there was silver-plating enough about it and the harness, to lay all the witches in the country.

My Grandmother also instructed that people how to make coffee, which was pounded in a mortar; and

by the time she went out of town, the sound of the mortar was heard in all that land. By this time, no doubt, she and Ceres are equally regarded as mythological, by their posterity.

These family tales, apt to be exaggerated by the humorous and embroidering faculty of the Dunbars, Joneses, and Thoreaus, explain in part the peculiarities that descended to the persons whom I knew; in which, as Tacitus says of the customs of Marseilles, where Agricola was educated, "provincial frugality and urban courtesy were mingled and well combined."

Like the Joneses, the Dunbars, of Bridgewater, were a large family. Samuel, the son of James, of Hingham, had thirteen children besides Asa; of the fourteen, eleven were sons and three daughters, giving the Thoreaus a great many cousins. But in the three households with which this book is concerned, prosperity disappeared between 1776 and 1817 (the year of Henry's birth) either by reason of the Revolution and confiscation, or of orphanage (by the death of John Thoreau the Jerseyman), or by the later quarrel with England, between 1804 and 1816. The large estate of the Joneses was mostly confiscated, or lost, in the long struggle of the American Revolution; while the dispersion of her relatives to the British provinces, to

England, or to remote parts of New England, kept them apart from Mrs. Minot. John Thoreau the Jerseyman for years kept up little communication with his Jersey family, during the war; and the foundation of his fortune in Boston was laid by privateering against English commerce. His casual meeting at sea with the first President Adams is only traditional, but highly probable. In his Journal for June 11, 1853, four years after his sister Helen's death, Henry wrote: —

I remember Helen's telling me that John Marston, of Taunton, told her that he was on board a vessel during the Revolution, which met another vessel, — and, as I think, one hailed the other, — and a French name being given could not be understood, whereupon a sailor, probably aboard his vessel, ran out on the bowsprit and shouted "La Sensible," and that sailor's name was Thoreau. My father has an idea that he stood on the wharf and cried this to the bystanders. . . .

I find from his Diary that John Adams set sail from Port Louis at L'Orient in the French frigate Sensible, Captain Chavagnes, June 17th, 1779, the Bonhomme Richard, Captain Jones, and four other vessels being in company at first, and the Sensible arrived at Boston the 2d of August. On the 13th of November following, he set out for France again in the same frigate from Boston, and he says that a few days before the 24th, being at the last date "on the Grand

Bank of Newfoundland," "we spoke an American privateer, the General Lincoln, Captain Barnes." If the above-mentioned incident occurred at sea, it was probably on this occasion.

The Marstons, of Taunton, were kinsmen of the Marston-Watsons, of Plymouth, Thoreau's friends, and of the late Commodore John Marston, of the American navy. The incident may have dwelt in John Marston's mind, as being the first time he had heard the name Thoreau; indeed this emigrant was the first man who bore that name from Jersey to New England, where it is now extinct. Other Jersey and Guernsey names are common here, — Langlais, Le Breton, Janvrin, Cabot, Graffort, Sohier, etc., — but this one scion of a race, nearly perished from Jersey itself, is all that ever took root here, and that for little more than a century — from 1773 to 1881.[1]

Certain traits in which Henry seemed peculiar might be traced back to this Channel island, inhabited by a composite, pugnacious, sturdy, thrifty, equalized but privileged people of the old Duchy of Normandy. Their rocky island had been known to Celts, Phœnicians, Carthaginians,

[1] The Peter Thoreau mentioned in a former note bought in 1782 a house on Cambridge Street, Boston, which he sold in September, 1784, to Josiah Harris for four hundred dollars, with land adjacent.

Romans, Gauls, Goths, Scandinavians, Normans, and other branches of the Indo-European and Semitic families. They were as mixed as any population in Europe; but for five or six centuries had enjoyed special privileges arising from their position intermediate between the warring nations of France and England. King John of England had given them exemption from tariffs, and allowed them to be governed by their own laws and usages. They had resisted conquest, and extended trade and fishery; their customs were ancient, their language neither good French nor good English; and yet in it they had gained more education of its own sort than most of the subjects of the English crown. Privateering, a kind of legalized piracy, was a habit with them; so that young John Thoreau readily fell into it when he got to Boston. His marriage with a Scotch lassie, Jane Burns, whose father had lately died in Scotland, introduced a fresh Scottish element among his descendants, who, as his daughter Maria said of herself, might have "the vivacity of the French and the superstition of the Scotch." To all this, genteel poverty was added in Henry Thoreau's immediate family, for reasons that will appear in the next chapter.

CHAPTER II

THE BOYHOOD AND YOUTH OF THOREAU

ALTHOUGH all the children of John Thoreau and Cynthia Dunbar (who were married in Concord in 1812) well remembered their grandmother Mary Jones, of Weston, none of them ever saw their grandfather John Thoreau, of Jersey, who had died at Concord in 1801. His privateering had given him a fund for mercantile ventures, and he was a prosperous merchant on the Long Wharf, at the foot of State Street, for some twenty years, before he took up his residence in Concord, buying the house which is now a portion of the Colonial Inn, on the public Square, opposite the Court House there. His house in Boston was on Prince Street at the North End, and it continued to be the property of his children for many years after his death. His first wife, Jane, had died in 1797, leaving him eight children, of whom the eldest son, John, was in 1801 but fourteen years old; and he had married a second wife, a widow Kettell, the sister of a Charlestown merchant, Joseph Hurd, who long survived her husband, and had the care of his minor children. She was also related to Dr. Hurd,

of Concord, a respectable physician, who had married the mother of Mary Wilder at Lancaster, and brought her to reside with her lovely daughter, in the oldest house in the village, which had been the parsonage of Rev. Daniel Bliss, the great-grandfather of the Emerson brothers, and the grandfather of Mary Moody Emerson. The estate of the elder Thoreau had been considerable for those early days of the Republic, when $100,000 (the estate of the widow Custis, when Colonel Washington married her) was esteemed great riches in Virginia. John Thoreau left about $25,000, including his two houses, in Boston and in Concord, and some $12,000 in cash or good securities. But his eight children were to be supported and educated, and the times soon became "hard" in consequence of the long war between England and France, and the consequent embargoes and spoliations afflicting New England commerce.

By will John Thoreau left to his second wife, Rebecca Thoreau, the use of the Concord house and furniture, with $3702 in money at interest; and made her brother, Joseph Hurd, executor of the will, who soon became guardian of the eight children. An examination of his guardian's account, which I have made, shows what became of the property of these orphans. Mr. Hurd re-

ceived $200 a year for his care of the property. His sister, the widow Thoreau, received not less than $850 a year for the board, clothing, etc., of the eight; of whom two, Mary and Nancy, died before coming of age and a third, David Thoreau, before he had any occupation. The fees of lawyers, clerks, sheriffs, etc., consumed from $50 to $100 a year besides. The widow Thoreau died in 1814, and Mr. Hurd became her administrator. Her own private estate had been encumbered in the care of her stepchildren, and out of $2903 of her personal property, Mr. Hurd paid himself $1488 for money lent and interest thereon. He added $1032 for expenses of settlement and sale (of furniture, etc., partly to himself); and this left but $445 to pay the legacies of $600 which she had left — $100 to Dr. Ripley, her minister, and $100 each to her five brothers and sisters. Her estate was not finally settled till 1819, and then the legatees had to accept but $71 each, in lieu of the round hundred. One cause of the delay was that young John Thoreau had borrowed of his stepmother, on a mortgage of the paternal house in Boston, $1500 to set himself up in business as a merchant; had been unsuccessful, and delayed repayment. (The mortgage was of 1808 for $1000, but not recorded till 1811.)

Mr. Hurd's account as guardian was not settled till 1815, when there remained but six of the eight orphans in life. Two of these had married — John, and Elizabeth (who wedded and settled in Maine), while John afterwards lived for short times in Chelmsford and in Boston, but returned to Concord, where all his children were born. It does not appear that the thrifty Mr. Hurd lost anything by his management of the two estates; perhaps their diminution was unavoidable; but the result was to leave five orphans well educated but poor and frugal. They kept what they inherited and earned, and at the death of the last survivor, Maria Thoreau, in 1881, a hundred years after the marriage of her mother, Jane Burns, the united estates of herself and her niece Sophia, dead five years earlier, were just about equal to the $25,000 that John Thoreau had bequeathed.

His son John had learned the family trade of merchandising from Deacon John White in Concord, his nearest neighbor in the village square, and had commenced as a merchant in Concord. The daughter of Mrs. Captain Minot, Cynthia Dunbar, was living with her mother on the Minot farm, Virginia Road, where afterwards her son Henry was born, and she was there wooed by the young merchant, and followed his sinking for-

THOREAU'S BIRTHPLACE ON THE VIRGINIA ROAD

tunes with cheerful courage. They remained in Concord till late in 1818, when they removed to Chelmsford, ten miles away, where John Thoreau sold groceries and liquor. While I lived in the Old Manse, or in the house of Mrs. Simmons near by, 1865–66, I was allowed by the Ripley family to examine the papers of Dr. Ezra Ripley, which he had carefully preserved, and which I found in a dusty attic, near the "Prophets' Chamber" which the youthful Emersons had occupied when visiting their grandmother. There I discovered amid a mass of letters and manuscripts, inscriptions for tombstones, appointments for parish meetings, etc., a pious meditation of 1818, on the back of which Dr. Ripley had written, at the request of his former parishioner, Henry Thoreau's father, this certificate: —

> Understanding that Mr. John Thoreau, now of Chelmsford, is going into business at that place, and is about to apply for license to retail ardent spirits, I hereby certify that I have been long acquainted with him, that he has sustained a good character, and now view him as a man of integrity, accustomed to store-keeping, and of correct morals.

There was no singularity in a merchant of any village at that date vending or giving away the liquors now so much under legal ban. Every store-

keeper did it, and Deacon White had accustomed his apprentice Thoreau to serve it to his customers in the village. Colonel Whiting, one of my friends in Concord so long as he lived (he died in 1862) and in whose house I took refuge when the United States Senate ordered my arrest in February, 1862, for refusing to appear before them as a witness, told me that in his youth at Concord, early in the nineteenth century, there were five "stores" and three taverns in the village, then containing one thousand inhabitants only, in which liquors (usually New England rum) were sold by the glass to any and everybody. It was the habit, too, when a customer bought so much as a half-dollar's worth of goods, to offer him a glass of liquor, which was generally accepted. John Thoreau, Jr., had become of age late in 1808, had borrowed money of his stepmother, and had begun as a merchant at Concord in 1809. He then took his father's last Boston daybook, for merchandise sold in Boston (dated in 1797), cut out the Boston entries, put in his own Concord entries of 1809 and later, and used the rest of the book for his Chelmsford sales, from November 15, 1818, to March 21, 1821, the date of his removal to Boston, or just before.

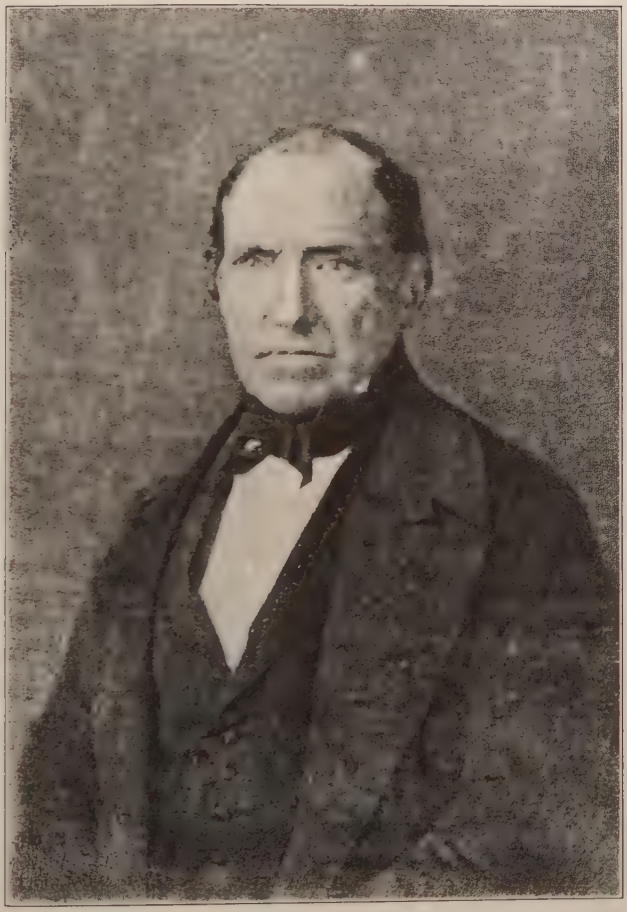
Then the unprosperous merchant removed to

Boston, through Concord, and lived for two years in Pinckney Street. There Henry began his school instruction, at the age of five (he was born July 12, 1817), having been taught his letters before that by one of his aunts, no doubt. His family returned to Concord in 1823, soon gave up trade, in which there had been so little success, and took to the more profitable art of pencil-making, which had been introduced at Concord, in 1812, by William Monroe, the father of the benefactor of the same name who in 1863 presented Concord with its fine library building, and a fund for its support in certain directions.

At his birth, Henry had been named David, for his uncle David Thoreau (himself named for a Boston ancestor, the Quaker seaman David Orrok), who had come of age in 1815, seven years after his brother John. David received only $724 from his father's $25,000 — not less than $1453 having been expended on his support and education. He died in August, 1817, a few weeks after the birth of his nephew Henry, who was baptized in October by Dr. Ripley, under the name of David Henry. He remembered a few incidents that occurred at the Minot farm, where he lived for a year; then for a few months in a red house on the Lexington road, near where the Emerson

house was afterwards built. Then Henry's father, having been in debt to his stepmother's estate, and unable to pay,[1] removed to Chelmsford, as above mentioned. There he kept store and practised mechanic arts, in which, like his son, he was skilful, painting signs and doing such things. When he returned to Concord in 1823, he lived with his sisters for some years in the house of his father on the square; but till 1826 in the brick house of the late Josiah Jones, at the corner of Main Street and the Walden Road, next to the three-story wooden house of Deacon Vose. Across the street, but a little westward, stood the mansion of Dr. Isaac Hurd, who practised medicine in Concord for fifty-four years. It had been successively a garrison against Indians, parsonage house of the town minister, and library of Harvard College in 1775–76. The students then recited in the parish church, and an old lady whom Thoreau visited in after years, gave these recollections of that troubled period:—

[1] August 23, 1817, John Thoreau was adjudged to turn over to J. Hurd, executor, the Prince Street property, which was then taken by his sisters.



JOHN THOREAU

Father of Henry D. Thoreau

Miss Anna Jones's Statement (November, 1837)
(Taken down by Henry Thoreau)

I lived down in the east part of Concord in 1775, two miles from Dr. Ripley's Meeting-house. Professor Wigglesworth (one of the two professors of the college while in Concord) lived in part of our house nine months; he used to go up twice a week to hear the scholars recite at the Meeting-house.

I had two brothers in the war, Stephen and Timothy Jones, Stephen a Minute Man. About one o'clock at night, April 18, Dr. Prescott came and told him the British were coming: he ran right down the back-stairs and fired his gun, as he had been directed. I went down too, and heard the guns popping all around. Stephen went off to join his company under Captain David Brown. Mother "took on" very much for fear he would be killed. He came back with his company about 10 A.M., went down cellar and got his mother's best cheese, tapped a barrel of cider, and drew two pailsful; so they had something to eat and drink. Brother Timothy's captain was a Bedford man (David Wilson, a brother-in-law of Thompson Maxwell, of Amherst, New Hampshire, who took part in the fight).

Rev. William Emerson used to preach to the Minute Men in Concord and Acton twice a week; he told them "they had better go without their firelock than without their religion."

Mr. Buttrick the miller was taken by the British; they took hold of him and said they "would send him

to hell." But he said he had such a well-established mind that he was n't afeared; they might do as they pleased, he could not live long at any rate.

The village in 1823 was much what it had been when the British arrived there at noon, April 19, 1775. The schoolhouse, town-house, and church were not far from the "Milldam," where now the shops are — at first a footway over the dam which made the millpond for this nonchalant miller; afterwards a street to shorten travel from Boston, which was incessant by 1823. A daily stage-coach ran through, from the westward as far as Keene, to Boston, and Concord itself supplied a local coach or wagon to take the townspeople through Charlestown, or over the Cambridge turnpike, to the city; while wagons, chaises, and long lines of market-wagons went and came by the same roads. New Hampshire and Vermont sent their rural products to market by teams that "baited" at the three taverns as they went down to Boston with their loads, or returned with "dry goods," "West India goods," and groceries, from that port of entry. Everything in the village bespoke commerce and the mechanic arts, for every kind of mechanic had his shop or bench there. All thriving persons kept their own cows and hogs, hens and geese; and many rode

or drove their own horses and yokes of oxen. John Thoreau pastured his cow, like the rest, and little Henry, barefoot, was sent to "turn her out," or drive her home at night for milking. In the summer and early autumn he went barefoot to school; and I had my first glimpse of him climbing the hill of science, when an old lady, a cousin of the Emersons, and niece of Mary Moody Emerson, told me, with a little start, how the girls' school of Phebe Wheeler, on one disturbing day, saw ushered into it, where she, a member of Dr. Ripley's household, was studying, John and Henry Thoreau, big barefoot boys.[1] They had been sent by their mother, the careful Cynthia, to get a little private schooling, after the town primary school had closed for the term.

No doubt both these boys pursued learning eagerly, and both were ready pupils in what are now called "vocational" studies — taught perhaps, by their father, and stimulated by the example of other boys, with their knives and bows, traps and sleds, and by and by their shotguns.

[1] This schoolgirl, afterwards Mrs. Cleveland, of New York, when leaving the Old Manse of her kinsman, Dr. Ripley, I suppose about 1825, was given some good advice, of which she remembered this: "When you must choose between a duty and a pleasure, always follow the path of duty — something which your Aunt Mary never does."

Years afterwards while at Walden, Henry wrote, with keen recollections: —

> In the country a boy's love is apt to be divided between a gun and a watch; but the more active and manly choose the gun. I have seen the time when I could carry a gun in my hand all day long on a journey, and not feel it to be heavy, though I did not use it once. The hunter has an affection for his gun which no laborer has for the tool which he uses — his axe or spade. To-day the villager, whose way leads him through a piece of wood or over a plain where game is sometimes met with, will deliberate whether he shall not take his gun, because, as he says, "he may see something." If the Indian and the bear are gone, the partridge and the rabbit are left.

George Minot, Thoreau's "old man of Verona," was a famous shot. Meeting his nearest neighbor, Emerson, one day, going to town-meeting, the sage asked Minot if he was not going to vote, too? "N-no," drawled the old hunter; "what you do with your vote hez got to be done over ag'in; what I do with my gun stays where 't is; — I'm goin' gunnin'." In his youth, Thoreau was interested both in gunning and voting; and there is an old letter of 1838 to his brother John, in the Indian lingo of Cooper or Schoolcraft, in which the town-meeting and the pleasures of hunting

are mixed up, with some allusion also to the rising lights of Transcendentalism.

In his Life of Thoreau, which, on the whole, is still the best account of him, Ellery Channing's turn for recording queer trifles is indulged. Its first edition of 1873 relates that at Chelmsford, before he was six years old, "he was tossed by a cow," like Tom Thumb in the story; "and again, by getting at an axe without advice, he cut off a part of one of his toes. And once he fell from a stair, after which last achievement, as after others, he had a singular suspension of breath, with a purple hue in his face, — owing, I think, to his slow circulation. Perhaps a more active flow of blood might have afforded him an escape from other and later troubles. I have heard many such stories from his mother about these early years; she enjoyed not only the usual feminine quantity of speech, but thereto added the lavishness of age. Being complained of for taking a knife belonging to another boy, Henry said, 'I did not take it,' and was believed. In a few days the culprit was found out. He then said, 'I knew all the time who it was. The day it was taken I went to Newton with father.' 'Why did you not say so at the time?' 'I did not take it' was the reply. At the earlier age of three, being told that he must

die, like the men in the catechism, he said, as he came in from coasting, that he did not want to die and go to Heaven, if he could not take his sled with him; the boys said it was not worth a cent, because it was not shod with iron." His ideal Indian of after years had the same weakness: —

> "And thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
> His faithful dog shall bear him company."

When he was an infant, a few of the richer men of the village, Squire Hoar, Colonel Whiting, Dr. Heywood, and others, gave a fund and opened the Concord Academy, in which their children and others, whether boys or girls, could study Latin, Greek, and French. To this school Henry aspired, and there he was fitted for college at the age of sixteen, entering the Freshman class of 1833.

Honest poverty, which was the lot of the Thoreaus from 1812 to 1828, was no bar to respectability in Concord then, and indeed was a frequent result of mercantile ventures. Tilly Merrick, the stepson of Captain Duncan Ingraham, who was in 1777 the host of Sir Archibald Campbell when a prisoner, and became the ancestor of the novelist Marryat, had inherited a small fortune, and increased it in trade at Charleston, South Carolina; but lost some forty thousand dollars there, and returned to Concord to be a poor man the

rest of his life. But he was sent to the General Court for years, and lived and died respected. He was the father of Mrs. Mary Merrick Brooks, whose mother was akin to Captain Minot, the second husband of Mrs. Dunbar, and who was herself a constant associate of the Thoreaus. Colonel Hurd, a son of Dr. Hurd[1] and nephew of Joseph, the guardian of the orphan Thoreaus, lost all his property, involved his father in his debts, and was for a while a prisoner for debt in the Concord jail. These persons and others, though saddened by their losses, continued to be members of the Social Circle (a Senate of the township), and their children were as carefully educated as those of the wealthy. The public taxes paid for good schools; private lessons in the languages (at the Academy or elsewhere) and in music and dancing cost but little; and good society was open to all who conducted themselves well — and to some who did not. John Thoreau was a peaceful and rather silent man; his wife and her sister, and his own unmarried sisters, took their share in the village politics and disputes.

One of the first subjects of dispute and division

[1] Dr. Hurd's son, a stepson of Mary Wilder, had been a partner of young John Thoreau, and involved him in some debts before 1813.

in the as yet undivided religious household of the town was the Unitarian controversy, between Calvinists and Arminians, among the New England Congregationalists. Under the stimulus of political revolutions, and exposed to the mild sunlight of Dr. Channing's philanthropic preaching in Boston, with other and more learned influences exerted by Harvard Professors (Edward Everett, Jared Sparks, Andrews Norton, Dr. Ware, and Dr. Palfrey), the seeming-solid ice of Calvinism had given way in Massachusetts, and those once accepted doctrines of Total Depravity and Eternal Damnation had been rejected by thousands of Christians and scores of parishes. After enduring this in comparative quiet for years, — though indulging in political animosity against Jefferson, who was Unitarian, and Madison, who, though an Anglican, had secured religious liberty for the Baptists of Virginia, — the Trinitarians rallied to the contest. They began to set up dissenting Congregational churches where the pewholders had given the control of the old church edifices to the heretics. Concord, in spite of its regard for Dr. Ripley, its sole pastor then for nearly forty years, began to divide, and to hold days of prayer, and Calvinistic meetings on Sundays.

The sisters of John Thoreau, then living in their father's house, joined this dissenting movement, in 1826–30, and became paying supporters of an orthodox parson Southmayd, first, and then of Rev. John Wilder, the grandfather of Mrs. Mabel Loomis Todd, of Amherst. These missionaries preached to the seceding congregation, and even drew away from Dr. Ripley's church his old and familiar deacon, White, the tithingman, village merchant, and instructor of John Thoreau in merchandising, which the latter had so unprofitably pursued. We may well fancy the bitter quarrel that soon arose, which, happily, did not permanently divide the fraternal and affectionate Thoreaus. John and Cynthia remained in the congregation of Dr. Ripley, until the period of the anti-slavery "come-outers," but Henry had "signed off" from the First Parish soon after leaving college in 1837. He then held opinions which his good aunts on either side (Thoreaus or Dunbars) scarcely ventured to examine for fear of being shocked; but they must have looked on him as a brand mysteriously saved from the burning. What induced these good women to retain their hold on opinions fast growing obsolete, and now hardly professed in the same New England circles, I cannot say. But with regard to Henry's

Aunt Louisa, I have heard the tale from her own mouth. In her youth, being left, by the early death of her father, to depend on herself, she soon took to teaching school, as the custom was; and chance brought her into that region, in New Hampshire, where a brilliant youth, a little older than herself, Daniel Webster (soon to be heard among the orators and statesmen of the nation), was preparing himself for his high career. In 1805–06, being in the same township (Boscawen) with Miss Dunbar, a lively and pleasing young lady of twenty, bred in Keene, he would sometimes invite her of an afternoon to drive out in his chaise; and his serious conversation on religion so affected her mind that (as I suppose) she went through an orthodox conversion, and joined Rev. Mr. Wood's church. At any rate, she told me, a few years after Webster's death, while looking at a good engraved portrait of Ames's Webster, made by Rowse, the crayon artist, which hung in the Thoreau dining-room, "that she owed her conversion, under Providence, to the serious impression made on her conscience by Daniel Webster." And from this Calvinistic profession of faith I think she never varied.

Whatever effect the Christian Church, with its catechism and ceremonies, may have had on

LOUISA DUNBAR

Henry's childish mind, I incline to think that the spectacle of Nature, in all her variable magnificence and vitality, was of greater moment. Next to that, perhaps, was the interest and the debates of the newly established Concord Lyceum, that opened its doors when Henry was twelve years old, in January, 1829.

This institution, still existing, but greatly changed from its first aims, and now used chiefly for popular entertainment, was propagated all over Massachusetts ninety years ago, as a source of enlightenment, by an enthusiast named Josiah Holbrook, who went about giving gratuitous lectures on geology and other nascent sciences, and incidentally urging the villagers to form libraries and collections, and institute debating societies, under the Greek name of Lyceums. Concord responded favorably, as Salem did; and in the winter that saw General Jackson inaugurated President, our village inaugurated its Lyceum, with Dr. Ripley for president, and Lemuel Shattuck, its future town historian, for secretary. Before his death in 1882, Waldo Emerson had given a hundred lectures in this Lyceum, and Thoreau nearly twenty before 1862. In its first winter, Edward Emerson, who had studied law with Daniel Webster, represented the four Emer-

son brothers, in a lecture on "The Geography of Asia." In Boston a similar but more pretentious Lyceum had Webster for its president, but did not continue much beyond 1840. The Concord audiences met at first in the brick school-room on the public square, near the Thoreau house, above which was the lodge-room of the Freemasons; next held their weekly meetings in the Unitarian Church vestry; and, since 1853, met in the Town Hall. In its first modest hall, Charles Emerson gave his famous lecture on Socrates, to which Thoreau listened. Quite as instructive as the lectures generally were the debates in alternate weeks, in which the attentive youth took a warm interest, and modelled their own speeches upon those which they heard from their village oracles. While fitting for college at the Academy (1830 to 1833), Thoreau frequented these exercises, and soon became a member (which could be done when twelve years old), and was an official for several years after graduating in 1837.

Before he entered college he had occasion to witness two violent political disputes, that between Masonry and the Anti-Masons over the mysterious murder of Morgan, a recanting Freemason, and that between President Jackson and three great Senators, Calhoun, Clay, and Web-

ster, over the United States Bank and the Nullification Act of South Carolina. On that, Webster was on Jackson's side; but on the Bank question, violently against the President. It does not appear that either of these disputes, although they raged violently for years, and divided households and churches, much affected Henry or John Thoreau. Henry was already training himself for the profession he early chose, that of a writer. With his vivacity and humor, he soon saw the ludicrous aspect of these political wrangles; and without much ambition for public distinction, he jested with both sides, or gravely pointed out serious moral consequences. A strain of that drollery which in his uncle Charles Dunbar ran to excess was early and long manifest in Henry Thoreau. Concord had a flourishing "Corinthian Lodge" of Masons, of which both Dr. Ripley and his son, Rev. Samuel Ripley, were members; while Asa Dunbar, as we saw, had been an orator in the Massachusetts lodges, and the master of a lodge in Keene for some years. His address at the Lancaster lodge has been reprinted in recent years, and is a good sample of his style. But the Thoreaus seem to have been averse to Masonry, and to secret societies in general. The quarrel extended from New York, where the murder of Morgan

occurred in 1826, to Vermont, Massachusetts, and other States, and in 1832 one State, Vermont, cast its vote for the Anti-Masonic candidate for President, William Wirt, of Virginia, a distinguished orator and author.[1] In Massachusetts, John Quincy Adams was the most distinguished Anti-Mason, and his influence and that of others was so great that the "Corinthians" lost their popularity, and held but few meetings for the dozen years between 1832 and 1845. Their eminent members, Dr. Ripley and his son, Lemuel Shattuck, the historian of the town, Drs. Hurd and Nelson, John Keyes, the postmaster, Colonel Whiting, Abel Moore (Emerson's "Captain Hardy"), Wesson, the Landlord of Thoreau's early essay, etc., united, in 1831, for a defence of Freemasonry, which had wide circulation, but did not make the lodge popular in Concord. Its "History" published in 1859 by Louis Surette, and jocosely known as "The Third Epistle to the Corinthians," is a valuable biographical work for local historians, and includes a very curious full-length portrait of Dr. Ripley, one of its earliest members. In its pages I made my first appearance as a biographer, furnishing short sketches of the two

[1] The first successes of Governor Seward and Thurlow Weed in New York were won as Anti-Masons. I was never a Mason.

clerical Ripleys, from papers at the Old Manse and in Emerson's library.

Thoreau had various missions in this world, some of which he fulfilled, and passed beyond them; others he did not live long enough to complete, and only approached perfection at remote intervals. Versifying was one of these latter; though the poetic perception and ideal nature were his in a marked degree. But his prose style was not only brought to a high point of excellence in his last twenty years, but he exhibited in youth an early capacity for good writing, which his devotion to the art developed into what may easily pass for perfection in his best passages. As I was fourteen years younger than Thoreau, and only knew him in his last seven years, though intimately for that length of time, I never saw his boyish compositions. But the affectionate research of Alfred Hosmer rescued from oblivion, and a more distant disciple, Mr. Hill, of Arizona, has lately printed, a faultless specimen of his composition at about the age of ten, while he was still known by the family title of "David Henry." It is

The Seasons

Why do the seasons change? and why
  Does Winter's stormy brow appear?
Is it the word of Him on high
  Who rules the changing, varied year?

There are four Seasons in a year, Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter. I will begin with Spring. Now we see the ice beginning to thaw, and the trees to bud. Now the winter wears away, and the ground begins to look green with the new-born grass. The birds, which have lately been to more southern countries, return again to cheer us with their morning song.

Next comes Summer. Now we see a beautiful sight. The trees and flowers are in bloom. Now is the pleasantest part of the year. Now the fruit begins to form on the trees, and all things look beautiful.

In Autumn we see the trees loaded with fruit. Now the farmers begin to lay in their Winter's store, and the markets abound with fruit. The trees are partly stripped of their leaves. The birds which visited us in Spring are now retiring to warmer countries, as they know that Winter is coming.

Next comes Winter. Now we see the ground covered with snow, and the trees are bare. The cold is so intense that the rivers and brooks are frozen.

There is nothing to be seen. We have no birds to cheer us with their morning song. We hear only the sound of the sleigh bells.

Here is selection of topics and simplicity of style which the Master of Sentences could not surpass. He could infuse more imagination, and display more energy; but the child here is father of the man; or, rather, here is the perennial boy. As Channing wrote: "Never eager, with a pensive

hesitancy he steps about his native fields, singing the praises of music and Spring and Morning, forgetful of himself"; adding, "He was one of those who keep so much of the boy in him, that he could never pass a berry without picking it."

CHAPTER III

COLLEGE ESSAYS OF A YOUTH OF GENIUS

David Henry Thoreau entered Harvard College in 1833 at the age of sixteen, at that time rather above the average age of entrance. Edward Everett had graduated at about that age, and had written many essays before graduating. Thoreau was not required to write English essays in his Freshman year; and, with the exception of the brief "composition" on "The Seasons," already printed, there are no extant letters, or essays of his, earlier than those soon to be given. Presumably he had written short essays at school, had composed translations, and had indited and sent letters; but no such seem to have been preserved. We might ask why these particular manuscripts were saved when others went to the fireplace in the years when the use of flint and steel and the tinder-box for kindling winter fires required the aid of dry paper; still more when the hardwood coals, covered up with ashes, furnished the seeds of fire in the December morning, or at the outdoor blaze which the priming of the flintlock musket, or the cherished sparks of the tobacco

pipe, kindled in woodland or pasture, for the rambling or wood-chopping boy. The most likely answer is that aunt or sister had cherished them, and taught the youth to keep them, until, as with the later manuscripts, they were kept till there seemed to be no further use for them. Thoreau never appears to have begrudged the labor of copying and revising; seldom have I known an author who made more drafts of what he might some time print, or more persistently revised what he had once composed. The Journal entries, which may have begun as early as 1835, commonly went through three forms, — the first notes, hastily jotted down on a walk or a sail, then the full copy written out at leisure, and, third, the copying into a volume, to be afterwards broken up and destroyed, when its chief contents had gone to be printed or had been put into finished essays, like the "Service" of 1840. He employed no amanuensis so long as his fingers could hold the pen; then for a few months his sister Sophia wrote a few letters, and possibly some pages for the magazines in which his rare contributions appeared. I have found a meditative description (evidently influenced by Irving) as early as 1835, and it is possible that the ballad "Godfrey of Boulogne," soon to be given, dates as far back as

that. But of the date of the college essays, we can be reasonably sure.

The earliest dated letter from Thoreau yet found was written to a classmate in college, Henry Vose, of a family resident in Concord, though not himself then living there, but in Dorchester; otherwise the two Seniors would have met and arranged colloquially for rooming together. He was afterwards Judge Vose, and outlived Thoreau by seven years, dying in 1869.

CONCORD, *July* 5, 1836.

DEAR VOSE: — You will probably recognize in the following dialogue a part which you yourself acted.

ACT I. Scene 1st.

T. Come, Vose, let's hear from a fellow now and then.

V. We-ll, I certainly will, but you must write first.

T. No, confound you, — I shall have my hands full, and, moreover, shall have nothing to say; while you will have bonfires, gunpowder plots, and deviltry enough to back you.

V. Well, I'll write first; and in the course of our correspondence we can settle a certain other matter.

Now 't is to this "certain other matter" alone that you are indebted for this epistle.

The length and breadth, the height and depth, the sum and substance of what I have to say is this: —

Your humble servant will endeavor to enter the

Senior Class of Harvard University next term; and if you intend taking a room in College, and it should be consistent with your pleasure, will joyfully sign himself your lawful and proper "chum."

Should the case be otherwise, you will oblige him much if you will request that sage doughface of a Wheeler to secure me one of the following rooms, agreeably to his polite offer.

H. D3 [Holworthy].
St. do [Stoughton].
H. 27. St. do.
St. 28. H. do.

Look well to the order. I shall expect to hear from you forthwith. I leave it to you to obtain a room, should it be necessary.

Yrs. Matter-of-fact
D. H. THOREAU.

There is nothing very noticeable about this letter, except that it implies a youthful conversable spirit, such as a collegian approaching nineteen ought to have.

Nor was he averse to the usual rebellious gayeties of college life, as may be inferred from a letter sent to him five weeks before, while he was at home and in poor health, by his classmate Peabody, reciting the pranks of the Davy club, a chemical society, when fireworks were exhibited by Henry Williams, and were reported to the

Faculty by Tutor Bowen, thus securing a small punishment (public admonition) from President Quincy for Henry Bigelow, afterwards a celebrated surgeon, and Williams. The chemical professor at that time was J. W. Webster, who was executed some years after for the murder of Dr. Parkman.

That Thoreau was ever thus admonished, or came under direct college censure, nowhere appears, but his independent spirit seems to have been recognized before this date. When his townsman, Emerson, in June, 1837, wrote to Quincy urging some lenity toward so good a scholar and so wide a reader, the good-natured old President replied (June 23, 1837):—

> I was willing and desirous that whatever falling-off there had been in his scholarship should be attributable to his sickness. He had, however, imbibed some notions concerning emulation and college rank, which had a natural tendency to diminish his zeal, if not his exertions. There is no doubt that, from some cause, an unfavorable opinion has been entertained, since his return after his sickness, of his disposition to exert himself.

His illness must have been rather serious, from the account he gave of himself to another classmate, Charles Wyatt Rice, in his next letter,

a month later than that just quoted, which likewise throws light on his early river-sailing, his poetic readings, and the turn of his quaint humor at nineteen: —

CONCORD, *August 5*, 1836.

FRIEND RICE: —

You say you are in the hay-field: how I envy you! Methinks I see thee stretched at thy ease by the side of a fragrant rick, with mighty flagon in one hand, a cold slice in the other, and a most ravenous appetite to boot. So much for haying.

Now I cannot hay, nor scratch dirt; I manage to keep body and soul together another way. I have been manufacturing a sort of vessel in miniature; not an *ευσελμον νεαν*, as Homer has it [a well-benched ship], but a kind of oblong bread-trough.

> In times of yore, 't is said, the swimming Alder,
> Fashioned rude, with branches lopt, and stript
> Of its smooth coat, —
> Where fallen tree was not, and rippling stream's
> Vast breadth forbade adventurous leap,
> The brawny swain did bear secure to farthest shore.
>
> The Book has passed away,
> And with the book the lay,
> Which in my youthful days I loved to ponder;
> Of curious things it told,
> How wise Men Three of old, (Gotham)
> In bowl did venture out to sea, —
> And darkly hints their future fate.
>
> If men have dared the Main to tempt
> In such frail bark, why may not washtub round,
> Or bread-trough square? oblong? — suffice to cross
> The purling wave? and gain the destined port.

When I begin to feel "bluey" I just step into my hog-trough, leave care behind, and drift along our sluggish stream, at the mercy of the winds and waves.

The following is the log-book of the Red Jacket, Captain Thoreau.

Set sail from the Island, — the Island, — how expressive! Reached Thayer's after a tedious voyage, having encountered a head-wind during the whole passage; waves running mountain high, with breakers to leeward. However, arrived safe, and, after a thorough outfit, being provided with extra cables and a first-rate birch mainmast, — weighed anchor at 3 P.M. August 1, 1836, N.N.E. wind blowing. The breeze having increased to a gale, tacked ship and prepared for emergencies. Just as the ship was rounding to Point Dennis, a squall struck her under a cloud of canvas, which swept the deck. The aforesaid mast went by the board, carrying with it the only mainsail. The vessel, being left at the mercy of the waves, was cast ashore on Nashawtuck Beach. The natives, a harmless, inoffensive race, principally devoted to agricultural pursuits, appeared somewhat astonished that a stranger should land so unceremoniously on their coast. Got her off at 20 minutes of 4; and after a pleasant passage of ten minutes, arrived safely in port, with a valuable cargo.

The short voyage, here magniloquently described, was up the Sudbury River, toward the south, and back again to some moorings on the

Lowell road, where, some eighteen years before, a young clockmaker's apprentice named Dyar had set up the first electric telegraph ever seen in operation, for a few rods along that causeway, from Concord Village. For in 1836 the Thoreaus were living in their own Thoreau house, near and opposite to the present Court House in Concord. The boat was probably the second that Henry and John had built. The first was called "The Rover"; the name of this "bread-tray" or "hog-trough" is given as "Red Jacket" above.

In this singular epistle I have ventured to restore the rhythmical passage into what may have been its original form. The first verses are evidently a rendering of some Latin poet, probably Ovid, intimating how the European alder, large enough for a canoe, was turned into one, where the stream by which it grew was too large to be jumped, or too wide to be swum across. The second stanza is original, satirizing his own attempts to build a boat for his river voyaging, in which with the aid of his brother John, he succeeded in 1836.[1] It is plain that David Henry, the Junior

[1] This letter was in the collection of Alfred Hosmer at Concord, and has lately been printed by E. B. Hill, of Mesa, Arizona. As to the boat, Henry indicates it was a short, oblong scow, in which a mast and sail might be set up, as in the boats he and John afterwards navigated on the two rivers.

Sophister, had been seriously ill, or was recovering from some severe illness to which, the next year, President Quincy made allusion in writing to Emerson. The rest of the epistle (long for Thoreau in those youthful years) is more like the ordinary letters of collegians in vacation. The part about river sailing is boyish, but original, and quaintly forecasting.

"Epistolary matter," says Lamb, "usually comprises three topics, — news, sentiments, and puns." Now, as to news, I don't know the coin; the newspapers take care of that. Puns I abhor, and more especially deliberate ones. Sentiment alone is immortal; the rest are short-lived, evanescent. This letter is neither matter-of-fact, nor *pun*gent, nor yet sentimental; it is neither one thing nor another; but a kind of hodge-podge, — put together in much the same style that mince pies are fabled to have been made, i.e., by opening the oven door, and from the further end of the room casting in the various ingredients; a little lard here, a little flour there, — now a round of beef, and then a cargo of spices, helter skelter.

I should like to crawl into those holes you describe; what a crowd of associations 't would give rise to! "One to once, gentlemen."

As to Indian remains, the season is past with me; the Doctor having expressly forbidden both digging and chopping. My health is so much improved that I shall return to Cambridge next term, if they will receive me.

French I have certainly neglected; Dan Homer is all the rage at present.

This from your friend and classmate,

D. H. THOREAU.

P.S. It would afford me much pleasure if you would visit our good old town this vacation; *in other words, myself.*

Don't fail to answer this forthwith; 't is a good thing to persevere in well-doing.

How true it is that the postscript contains the most important matter, invariably.

The style of this sprightly letter may be compared with the more serious and formal manner of his college essays of this year 1836. He confines himself here to no one or even six subjects; but ranges over a broad field, with but little connection among his topics. The same disconnection appears in his Journals, where he passes from one topic to another, connected by no visible thread of association. This was perhaps from an unwillingness wilfully to change the flow of his rapidly moving thoughts. Emerson had that fancy, which may have suggested this practice to Thoreau. The story of the voyage — a very real one, I am sure — is well told, but not the secret of manufacturing the rude boat. I have seen such on the river-banks now and then, for the use of boys and gunners, or for river fishing, of which

there was more when the population of the town was smaller than it is now. The boat built by John and himself two years later was a much larger and more elaborate affair, intended for several passengers, and adapted to the use of ladies. In becoming the property of Hawthorne, Mrs. Hawthorne gave it the sentimental name of "Pond-Lily." His later boat could more properly be called the "Cow-Lily" from its ruder form and heavier build; in it he carried loads of wood and other useful articles. It was usually paddled, yet sailed well, with its one sail. A little before this date the family had lived at the corner of Academy Lane and Main Street, where Thoreau kept hens.

Going back now from this letter, written during illness, to a year earlier, the calendar year 1835, when he had been in college some seventeen months, and had passed the first half of his eighteenth year; he was still called seventeen, and rated in college as a Sophomore. His first college essays are short, as Sophomore essays at Harvard were wont to be; then they grew longer, but are never tedious from their length; rather we should have wished the writer to develop his clear thought a little further. The first thing we notice in this first of the preserved essays is the strag-

gling and unsteady handwriting. This village youth at seventeen had not quite formed a firm and consistent chirography, though he had acquired a firm and significant character, and a noteworthy command of words in their delicate shades of meaning. His character needs chiefly the broadening which experience gives, and his language is to be guarded against the misguidance of an active and jocose fancy. At need, he can superscribe his "H. D. Thoreau" rather handsomely; but in current writing the letters falter and stagger too much. His ink is good and black — probably made on some domestic recipe, by his father or himself, as the custom then was in the country. This first essay touches without delay on that human trait which Thoreau always regarded with distrust, verging on disgust — hesitation and imitation culminating in irresolution. His text, chosen, no doubt, by Professor Edward Channing, uncle of his future friend, Ellery Channing, — who had already entered and left college, never to return, — runs thus: "We are apt to become what others (however erroneously) think us to be: hence another motive to guard against the power of others' [*sic*] opinion."

We may call the subject of the essay, without straining a point, —

HENRY DAVID THOREAU

I. Following the Fashion

We find, on looking around us, even within the small circle of our acquaintances, many who, though not at all deficient in understanding, cannot muster resolution enough to commence any undertaking, even the most trifling, without consulting a friend; who are too diffident of their ability to judge for themselves, and who, eventually, after a certain degree of solicitation, after the requisite number of arguments has been brought forward, almost invariably yield; though perhaps their good sense tells them better. I would not by any means have it understood that we are to neglect the advice of our friends; and ask another's opinion, as many do, merely to refute it, without considering that it is given at our own request, and that therefore we are to consider it a favor: but the majority of mankind are too easily induced to follow any course which accords with the opinion of the world. Nine out of ten will tell you, in answer to the question, "How shall you act with regard to this matter?" "I have n't concluded; what do *you* think best?" or something similar.

They seem to be tossed about in the rapid current of human life at the mercy of the waves: the voyage may be prosperous, they may eventually drift into a calm and secure haven; but on the other hand, it is much more likely that shipwreck will overtake them; or, as they are drifted along by the foaming torrent, thinking themselves secure from the innumerable enemies who crowd the shores on either side, they may be dashed down the cataract which, while meditating

on which shore they shall land, — to which party they shall surrender, — had escaped their notice. Thus are their actions principally the result of chance, and they become mere tools in the hands of others; since they are little qualified by nature to depend on their own strength and powers.

One principal cause of this is a false shame which many feel, lest they be considered singular or eccentric; and therefore they run into the opposite extreme, — become all things to all men, and conform to existing customs and rules, whether good or bad. This grows into a habit, and thus an entire change takes place in the disposition and character of the man.

On this creditable essay the shrewd Professor only comments by asking, "May they not retain their *character?*"

We notice in our turn the felicitous choice of words, the too great length of the sentences, and an occasional lack of what Professor Channing would have called "perspicuity." Perspicacity is not lacking; and the ruling trait in Thoreau's singularity is thus early manifested — a readiness to be thought eccentric, and not to follow the fashion. But this eccentricity does not here grow jocose, as in the letter to Rice just quoted; and instead of wandering from the subject, the essayist clings to it with the rigor of a logician,

rather than the imagination of the symbolist and poet, — which was his later trait.

Very early in the Sophomore essays comes this brief one on —

II. Anxieties and Delights of a Discoverer

"Give your idea of the Anxieties and Delights of a Discoverer, of whatever Class, — Columbus, Herschel, Newton."

It almost invariably happens that the lives of most distinguished characters are chequered with trials and disappointments, and that their eminence has been attained by years of toil and anxiety. But this seems to be particularly the case with the Discoverer. With him, all is uncertainty; chance may crown him with the highest honors, and chance may expose him to the ridicule and contempt of his fellow-men. Fortune may flatter him when all hope has vanished, and desert him when success seems near. Indeed, to the fall of an apple could Newton trace his famous discovery of the laws of universal gravitation.

Perhaps one succeeds and makes a discovery which shall immortalize his name: still, his work is not finished, he has the prejudices of the whole world to combat. He is satisfied in his own mind, but others are yet to be persuaded; the burden of proof lies on his side, and many are those who have sunk under it — who have met with more difficulty in gaining proselytes than in establishing the fact to their own satisfaction.

A dismal picture this. Of their delight we may judge by taking an example — Columbus, for instance. He conceives a project of sailing to the Indies by a bold and unusual route; this proposal, promising to make his native shores the centre of opulence and power, is rejected by the Genoese as chimerical. Stung with indignation and disappointment, he retires from his own country, to lay his scheme before the Court of France, where his reception is still more mortifying; nothing daunted, he presses onward, urged forward with irresistible ardor.

Is France averse to his project? England is his next resort; if one hill is not lofty enough to afford him a prospect of his El Dorado, he mounts another. In fact, his whole soul is wrapt up in his undertaking. Neglected by Portugal, Spain is his only resource; and there, after eight years of anxiety and toil, he succeeds, through the interest of Queen Isabella, in obtaining three small ships.

Trials still await him. An alteration of his compass spreads terror through his crew: threatened with mutiny, he still pursues his course at the hazard of his life. A glorious discovery awaits him, the dazzling splendor of which casts into the shade all his previous trials and difficulties.

What must have been his reflections on finding himself the discoverer of a New World? Did he ever regret his perseverance? Did he ever repent of having set himself up as the laughing-stock of Europe? Nay, — did not rather a sense of what he had endured serve to heighten the enjoyment of his success?

This is truly spirited, and shows how recently and carefully he had read Washington Irving's early chapters of the Life of Columbus, and perhaps Bancroft's first volume of United States History. In neither of those books is it easy to find a finer passage, so concisely worded.

III. An Essay on Variety of Energy in Men

"One of a cold and of a constant mind,
Not quickened into ardent action soon,
Nor prompt for petty enterprise; yet bold,
Fierce where need is, and capable of all things."

"Distinguish between this and other Kinds of energetic Character, and speak of one or more in History, who answer to the above Description."

Energy is a quality common to various characters, which to the eye of the careless observer appear to have no resemblance. It is as different in its nature as in its effects. Hence are we so often surprised by hearing of the decision of character, perseverance and success of those whom we always considered weak, irresolute, and totally unfitted to succeed in life. This surprise in part arises from our not having accustomed ourselves to behold this quality in all its forms. Some are easily excited, of a sanguine temper, ready for every undertaking, and for a time wholly absorbed in the prosecution of their designs. They aim to accomplish every thing by the suddenness of their decisions, and the rapidity of their movements; but, as some one has justly observed, zeal and enthusiasm are never

very accurate calculators. Their energy is of an inconstant kind; it is not accompanied by calmness and deliberation; so that their success if they meet with any, is not so much the effect of their own exertions as the work of chance. They are bold to decide, and though not easily overcome by obstacles (for these have the effect of arousing them to action) still, they are too ready to abandon a project, — not through discouragement, but want of interest.

Others, again, differ from the former in this respect only — that they are no less constant and determined in carrying through their undertakings, than hasty to decide. They are resolved not to relinquish a design once adopted, whether good or bad; and thus their energy amounts to rashness or foolishness as the case may be, and they are apt to employ it to little or no purpose.

That description of this quality which Philip van Artevelde possessed in so high a degree, appears by far the most desirable. Here Judgment is called upon to give her sanction or veto to the course proposed; her subjects, armed with her consent, together with that of her counsellors, Calmness and Caution, are prepared for every emergency, — they have but one end in view, which is the execution of her projects. Energy here holds a subordinate station; she composes the bone and muscle of the State, but Judgment and Deliberation are invested with the reins of government, and have the sole direction of affairs.

I know of no more suitable examples, by which to illustrate these two descriptions, than the characters of

Francis I. and Charles V., who, rivals for a period of 28 years, each possessing uncommon talents, — were as different in their temperaments as their abilities, and the advantages they enjoyed. The former was sudden to adopt his resolutions, and ardent in carrying them through; he exhibited the most daring courage in forming, as well as executing his plans, but was, however, too apt to relinquish them through impatience or disgust. Charles was long in coming to a decision, and cool and collected on every occasion; having once adopted a design, no obstacles could turn him from the prosecution of it.

Francis, by the rapidity of his motions and the impetuosity of his career, often baffled his rival's best-laid schemes. Like the mountain torrent swollen by a freshet, which in its rapid and irresistible course sweeps all before it, he often fell upon his enemy in a defenceless state, with a shock so violent as to drive him from the field at once; but in a few days this mighty torrent dwindled to a rippling brook which, not being able to reach the ocean, ends its course in some stagnant pool. Charles, on the other hand, resembled a broad but calm river, which, steady though rapid in its progress, flows onward to the ocean, — disdaining to be swallowed up by any inland sea, or to contribute its portion to a sister stream. It would doubtless have been well, had Charles possessed a little of King Francis's ardor and enterprise; but as it was, energy such as his was by far the most effective. The French monarch's hopes, however flattering, were rarely realized; however promising the prospect of each affair, they

were seldom attended by a fortunate issue. The Emperor, on the other hand, in spite of every obstacle, was generally successful in the end.

This essay shows careful reading in the histories of these two monarchs, and a fondness for figurative language that is somewhat fatiguing. The subject of the next forbids such tropes.

IV. Shall We Keep Journals?

"Of Keeping a private Journal, or Record of our Thoughts, Feelings, Studies and daily Experience, —containing abstracts of Books, and the Opinions we formed of them on first reading them."

As those pieces which the painter sketches for his own amusement in his leisure hours are often superior to his most elaborate productions, — so it is that ideas often suggest themselves to us spontaneously, as it were, far surpassing in beauty those which arise in the mind upon applying ourselves to any particular subject. Hence, could a machine be invented which would instantaneously arrange on paper each idea as it occurs to us, without any exertion on our part, how extremely useful would it be considered! The relation between this and the practice of keeping a journal is obvious. But yet the preservation of our scattered thoughts is to be considered an object but of minor importance.

Every one can think, but comparatively few can express their thoughts. Indeed, how often do we hear

one complain of his inability to express what he feels! How many have occasion to make the following remark, "I am sensible that I understand this perfectly, but am not able to find words to convey my idea to others." But if each one would occupy a certain portion of each day in looking back upon the time which has passed, and in writing down his thoughts and feelings, in reckoning up his daily gains, that he may be able to detect whatever false coins have crept into his coffers, and as it were, in settling accounts with his mind, — not only would his daily experience be greatly increased, — since his feelings and ideas would thus be more clearly defined, — but he would be ready to turn over a new leaf, having carefully perused the preceding one, and would not continue to glance carelessly over the same page without being able to distinguish it from a new one.

Most of us are apt to neglect the study of our own characters, thoughts and feelings, and, for the purpose of forming their own minds, look to others; who should merely be considered as different editions of the same great work. To be sure, it would be well for us to examine the various copies, that we might detect any errors; but yet it would be foolish for one to borrow a work which he possessed himself, but had not perused.

In fine, if we endeavored more to improve ourselves by reflection, by making a business of thinking and giving our thoughts form and expression, we should be led to read "not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider."

This is perhaps the most significant of these early essays of Thoreau, since in it appears the aim which he kept in view in his mature life; and also one or two of those quaint thoughts occur that are wont to enliven each paragraph in his published books. It shows, too, how early he had found the Essays of Bacon, and made that sententious book one of his models, so far as any author was his model, and not his remembrancer. It is not always easy in these short pieces to know when he is uttering himself, and when merely striving to meet the requirements of the subject which his professor has set before the class; but every now and then the real Thoreau breaks through the veil of the school exercise, and we get a glimpse of the writer, who was in later years, and long after his death, to exert so strong an influence on special intellects, not always akin to his own. For Thoreau stimulates as often by provocation and antagonism as by sympathy, which he was not very ready to extend or receive. He went through college as he went through life, with comparatively few intimates, and without lending his readers much aid in opening the prickly burr in which his sweetest kernels are apt to be lurking.

We now come to a longer essay, involving more discrimination.

V. The Varying Pursuits of Men

"The different ideas we form of men whose pursuit is Money, Power, Distinction, Domestic Happiness, Public Good."

Each one is, for the most part, under the influence of some ruling passion, and almost invariably possesses a taste for some particular pursuit. This pursuit, this object of all one's wishes and end of all his endeavors, has great influence with his fellow-men in determining his character: so that many, when possessed of this seemingly slight knowledge, think to fathom one's very thoughts and feelings. When we hear it said of a man that Money is the idol which he worships; that his whole soul is wrapped up in the pursuit of wealth, — we figure to ourselves one who is continually striving after something which he is destined never to obtain, and who does not enjoy life as it passes, but lives upon expectation. In short, one who has painted to himself an imaginary Elysium, towards which no step in his progress brings him nearer.

In other words, we imagine him one who is never satisfied with the wealth already amassed, but expects that when arrived at a certain pitch, everything desirable will be within his reach. But alas! when he has reached the summit of one peak, he is only enabled to realize the more fully the immense height of the next in succession. That every one is ashamed to acknowledge the pursuit in question as his own, is a fact which seems sufficiently to prove its baseness.

Aristocrats may say what they please, — liberty

and equal rights are and ever will be grateful, till nature herself shall change; and he who is ambitious to exercise authority over his fellow-beings, with no view to their benefit or injury, is to be regarded as actuated by peculiarly selfish motives. Self-gratification must be his sole object. Perhaps he is desirous that his name may be handed down to posterity; that in after ages something more may be said of him than that he lived and died. He may be influenced by still baser motives; he may take delight in the enjoyment of power merely; and feel a kind of satisfaction in the thought that he can command and be obeyed.

It is evident then that he who, thus influenced, attains at last the summit of his wishes, will be a curse to mankind. His deeds may never be forgotten, — but is this greatness? If so, may I pass through unheeded and unknown!

> "But grant that those can conquer, — these can cheat, —
> 'T is phrase absurd to call a villain great."

Small, very small is the number of those who labor for the public good. There appears to be something noble, something exalted in giving up one's own interest for that of his fellow-beings, which excites in us feelings of admiration and respect. He is a true patriot who, casting aside all selfish thoughts, and not suffering his benevolent intentions to be polluted by thinking of the fame he is acquiring, presses forward in the great work he has undertaken, with unremitting zeal; who is as one pursuing his way through a garden abounding with fruits of every description, without

turning aside or regarding the brambles that impede his progress; but pressing onward, with his eyes fixed upon the golden fruit before him.

He is worthy of all praise; his is indeed true greatness. He is satisfied with himself and all around him; nor is he troubled with *his* stings of conscience, whose memory lives with the smart which he leaves: but

> "One self-approving hour whole years outweighs
> Of stupid starers, and of loud huzzas."

The preceding papers are all essays, or "themes," as they were called in the dialect of Harvard College, which was in 1835 just completing its second century. Thoreau was likewise completing a year, his eighteenth, still bearing the name his parents had given him for a deceased uncle David, and of some unknown person named Henry. He soon inverted the order of these names, and preserved the "David" only by the initial.

With his Junior year in college he had been required to write essays in a new form, — "Forensics" they were called, implying a sort of discussion pro or con by the student, who enters now on the stage of debate. In this stage Thoreau had been aided by the fortnightly debates at the Concord Lyceum and by the college societies that he joined. His first forensic which has been preserved here follows (dated at Cambridge,

September 2, 1835). It is marked "No. 2," but its precursor seems to have perished.

VI. The Comparative Moral Policy of Severe and Mild Punishments

(This is the most noticeable, for thought and maturity, of all these youthful essays, though there is an inequality between its different parts natural enough in a youth of eighteen. Very noteworthy is his firm and concise grasp of the correct principle of Penalty, which was about that time getting stated by Edward Livingston in America, and by Captain Maconochie in Australasia. It was soon to be brilliantly and practically illustrated by Thoreau's younger contemporary, who long outlived him, — Z. R. Brockway, of the Elmira Reformatory Prison, — now, February, 1917, ninety-two years old, but retired from prison administration.)

The end of all punishment is the welfare of the State, — the good of the community at large, — not the suffering of an individual. It matters not to the lawgiver what a man deserves; for, to say nothing of the impossibility of settling that point, it would be absurd to pass laws against prodigality, want of charity, and many other faults of the same nature, — as if a man was to be frightened into a virtuous life, — though these, in a great measure, constitute a vicious

one. We leave this to a higher tribunal. So far only as public interest is concerned, is punishment justifiable, — if we overstep this bound, our own conduct becomes criminal.

Let us observe, in the first place, the effects of severity. Does the rigor of the punishment increase the dread operating upon the mind to dissuade us from the act? It certainly does if it be unavoidable. But where death is a general punishment, though some advantage may seem to arise from the severity, yet this will invariably be more than counterbalanced by the uncertainty attending the execution of the law. We find that in England, for instance, where, in Blackstone's day, 160 offences were considered capital, — between the years 1805 and 1817, of 655 who were indicted for stealing, 113 being capitally convicted, not one was executed: and yet no blame would attach to the conduct of the juries, — the fault was in the law. Had death, on the other hand, been certain, the law could have existed but a very short time. Feelings of natural justice, together with public sentiment, would have concurred to abolish it altogether.

In fact, wherever those crimes which are made capital form a numerous class, and petty thefts and forgeries are raised to a level with murder, burglary and the like, the law seems to defeat its own ends. The injured, influenced perhaps by compassion, forbear to prosecute, and thus are numerous frauds allowed to escape with impunity, for want of a penalty proportionate to the offence. Juries, too, actuated by the same motives, adopt the course pointed out by their

feelings. As long as one crime is more heinous and more offensive than another, it is absolutely necessary that a corresponding distinction be made in punishing them. Otherwise, if the penalty be the same, men will come to regard the guilt as equal in each case.

It is enough that the evil attending conviction exceeds the expected advantage. This, I say, is sufficient, provided the consequences be certain, and the expected benefit be not obtained. For it is that hope of escaping punishment, — a hope which never deserts the rogue as long as life itself remains, — that renders him blind to the consequence, and enables him to look despair in the face. Take from him this hope, and you will find that certainty is more effectual than severity of punishment. No man will deliberately cut his own fingers. The vicious are often led on from one crime to another still more atrocious, by this very fault of the law; the penalty being no greater, but the certainty of escaping detection being very much increased. In this case they act up to the old saying, that "one may as well be hung for stealing an old sheep as a lamb."

Some have asked, "Cannot reward be substituted for punishment? Is hope a less powerful incentive to action than fear? When a political pharmacopeia has the command of both ingredients, wherefore employ the bitter instead of the sweet?" This reasoning is absurd. Does a man deserve to be rewarded for refraining from murder? Is the greatest virtue merely negative, or does it rather consist in the performance of a thousand everyday duties, hidden from the eye of the world? Would it be good policy to make the most

exalted virtue, even, a subject of reward here? Nevertheless I question whether a pardon has not a more salutary effect, on the minds of those not immediately affected by it, — vicious as well as honest, — than a public execution.

It would seem then, that the welfare of society calls for a certain degree of severity; but this degree bears some proportion to the offence. If this distinction is lost sight of, punishment becomes unjust as well as useless. We are not to act upon the principle that crime is to be prevented at any rate, — cost what it may. This is obviously erroneous.

For years Thoreau lived in Concord Village in the near vicinity of the county jail, and could see the malefactors every few months brought there to be tried for their offences, or punished under sentence, and occasionally executed for the higher crimes. The ancient wooden jail of 1775–77, in which his Tory kindred had been imprisoned, and from which they escaped, stood twenty rods farther west on the road to Acton and Keene, across the road and a gunshot northeast from the Town Library, in which hangs Wilson's pen-and-ink sketch of that old prison. This was drawn by the clerk of Sir Archibald Campbell, member of Parliament and Colonel of a Highland regiment which he raised among his own clan in Scotland, and brought to the relief of Sir Henry Clinton, be-

CONCORD JAIL IN 1777

From the Drawing by John Wilson, Clerk to Sir Archibald Campbell

sieged in Boston by General Washington. But Boston had been captured before Sir Archibald got there, and he too was captured and brought with a few of his officers to be held there till exchanged.

On February 9, 1858, Thoreau entered in his Journal (x, 279): —

> Saw at Simon Brown's a sketch . . . on which was written "Concord Jail, near Boston, America," and on a fresher piece of paper . . . was written, "The Jail in which General Sir Arch[ld] Campbell & —— Wilson were confined when taken off Boston in America by a French Privateer." A letter on the back side, from Mr. Lewis of Framingham to Mr. Brown, stated that he, Lewis, had received the sketch from the grandson of Wilson, who drew it.
>
> You are supposed to be in the jail-yard, or close to it westward, and see the old jail, gambrel-roofed, the old Hurd house (partly) west of the graveyard, the graveyard, and Dr. Hurd house, and, over the last and to the north of it, a wooded hill, apparently Windmill Hill, and just north of the Hurd house, beyond it, apparently the court-house and school-house, each with belfries, and the road to the Battle-Ground, and a distant farmhouse on a hill, French's or Buttrick's, perhaps.

This was the prison in which the Jones brothers were confined. Its successor, where Thoreau spent

a night, was a larger structure, built of heavy stone, in the late eighteenth century, of which the jailer for years in our time was Sam Staples, who married the landlord's daughter, Miss Wesson. The ceremony was by Emerson, and Alcott was a witness.

Up to this time (1835) no distinct tendency toward literature was noticeable in young Henry Thoreau. His father and grandfather had been mercantile or mechanical in their way of life; the family in Jersey were by inheritance mercantile, though well taught; and something like mercantile methods were always visible in Henry's character. His own accounts and those of the Concord family were strictly kept, and frugality was the rule in that household, though it was always liberal to the poor and hospitable to all relatives and friends. Henry's maternal grandfather, Asa Dunbar, had indeed been college-educated, and had been a clergyman for a dozen years; and afterward (for political reasons, perhaps) a practising lawyer in New Hampshire, with a turn for oratory in both professions. It was from this side, evidently, that literary inheritance came; but Thoreau's style seems to have been affected by that French elegance to which his Norman descent entitled him; and an element of simplicity,

noticeable in that first "composition" of his, "The Seasons," was characteristic of him, when not perverted by his love of paradox and of punning — which is itself a sort of paradox. At any rate, now, in the autumn of 1835, the leading intellectual bent of his life began to appear; and here is its first extant manifestation in an essay: —

VII. The Literary Life

"I live like a Prince: not, indeed, in the pomp of greatness, but in the pride of liberty; master of my Books, master of my time. *Speak of the Pleasures and Privileges of a Literary Man.*"

Scriptorum chorus omnis amat nemus, et fugit urbes.[1]

This is as true of the literary man of the present day, as it is descriptive of the habits of the same class a thousand years ago. This love of retiring from the hurry and bustle of the world has, in all ages, closely adhered to those minds most devoted to study and elevated by genius. Such an one "will gladly snatch an hour of retreat, to let his thoughts expatiate at large, and seek for that variety in his own ideas which the objects of sense cannot afford him."

Horace's passion for retirement, and fondness for the country, are well known: leaving the bustling streets of Rome, he was wont to amuse himself at his retired villa in the Sabine territory, by commenting

[1] The motto of Thoreau is from Horace, Epistles, II. 77. By this time (beginning of his Junior year) he had read much of the witty wisdom of Horace.

upon the manners and characters of the age. It is to a retirement which lasted ten years that we are indebted for that celebrated work by Adam Smith, the "Wealth of Nations." And so of ten thousand others.

This is pure enjoyment. But this path can only be trodden by the enlightened and cultivated mind — it is folly for him, whose intellect has not been trained to study and meditation, to look for pleasure here; to him the path is dark and dreary, barren and desolate.

"This art of meditation," says an author, "is the power of withdrawing ourselves from the world, to view the world moving within ourselves, while we are in repose; as the artist, by an optical instrument, concentrates the boundless landscape around him, and patiently traces all nature in that small space."

Innocent and easily procurable pleasures constitute man's most lasting happiness: these are such as literature and imagination are both able and willing to afford. That undefinable misery, that insupportable tediousness, the curse of those who have nothing to do, is inconsistent with that relish for literature and science, which is a source of continual gratification to the mind. He who is dependent upon himself alone for his enjoyments, — who finds all he wants within himself, — is really independent; for to look to others for that which is the object of every man's pursuit, is to live in a state of perpetual trust and reliance. Happy the man who is furnished with all the advantages to relish solitude! he is never alone, and yet may be retired in the midst of a crowd; he holds sweet converse with the sages of antiquity, and gathers wisdom

from their discourse; he enjoys the fruit of their labors, — their knowledge is his knowledge, their wisdom his inheritance.

It is knowledge that creates the difference between man and man, — that raises one man above another. The mind that is filled with this valuable furniture is "a magazine richly furnished," a storehouse of the wisdom of ages; from which Reflection, who is door-keeper, and has charge of the keys, draws forth from time to time, as the Mind, the proprietor, has need of them. The sentiments of such a mind are sublime truths, of a pure and noble cast; rising above what is ignoble and mean, they breathe truth, "the essence of good": thus, inspired with a presentiment of virtue, man "is led through nature up to nature's God."

Many are the intimations of the future moralist and essayist in this Junior essay. The style is rather Johnsonian than Emersonian; but traces of the Emersonian ideas already appear, and also of "that bold reading in English poetry, even to some portions or the whole of Davenant's 'Gondibert,'" of which Channing speaks. In the allusion to the artist's instrument, by which he "concentrates the boundless landscape around him," he means the camera obscura, as described by Sir Henry Wotton in a letter to Lord Bacon, in a volume of Wotton's poems and letters. This reading he afterwards extended, so that he had

(by 1843) a commonplace-book of extracts, chiefly poetry, from Chaucer to Cowley. Emerson's "Nature" was not yet published; but his Concord address of 1835 was printed, and doubtless Thoreau heard him deliver it.

Another occupation, far from literary, but tending to literature, was Thoreau's in 1835, and in the "Shattuck house," later the Monroe house, — the keeping of poultry. Among the Walden manuscripts, for the "Village" chapter, I found this passage, omitted in his printed volume: —

When I kept hens once in the Village, I remember there one white rooster in one of the broods I reared, that went much by himself, — a stately-faced young cockerel, that still had a good deal of the pheasant in him. The note of this once wild Indian pheasant is certainly most remarkable. One night he was by chance shut out of the hen-yard, and after long reconnoitering and anxious going and coming, — with brave thoughts exalting him, and fancies rushing thick upon him, — crowing long, memoriter-wise of his Indian origin and wild descent, — he flew, bird-like, up into a tree and went to roost there. And I, who had witnessed this passage in his private history, forthwith wrote these verses and inscribed them to him: —

Poor Bird! destined to lead thy life
Far in the adventurous West,
And here to be debarred to-night
From thy accustomed nest:

Did Heaven bestow its quenchless inner light
So long ago, for thy small want to-night?
Why stand'st upon thy toes to crow so late?
The Moon is deaf to thy low, feathered fate.
Or dost thou think so to possess the Night,
And people the drear dark with thy brave sprite?

I fear, imprisonment has spoiled thy wit,
Or ingrained servitude extinguished it?
But no, — dim memory of the days of yore
By Brahmapootra and the Jumna's shore,
Where thy proud voice flew swiftly o'er the heath,
And sought thy food the jungle's shade beneath,
Has taught thy wing to seek yon friendly trees,
As erst by Indian banks of far Ganges.

This experience at hen-keeping was probably while the Thoreaus of the younger branch — Helen, John, Henry, and Sophia — lived with their parents in what had before 1835 been the home of Lemuel Shattuck, the first historian of Concord, at the corner of Main Street and Academy Lane. It was for many years the Monroe house, but has now passed into other hands — the Monroe family in Concord (of this branch) being extinct, as are the Thoreaus. This place, with its large garden and its trees, was better adapted to poultry-breeding than the house of Deacon Parkman (occupied by the Thoreaus from 1837 to 1844, inclusive) with its narrower space and lack of trees. Henry's "Gothic window" at the Monroe house, of which he wrote in 1835 that it "over-

looked the kitchen garden," would be a favorable place for watching and listening to this brave chanticleer. The verses are plainly of an early period — perhaps earlier than the ballad of "Godfrey of Boulogne," to be given hereafter.

The love of retirement, eulogized in this essay upon Professor Channing's text and Horace's verse, was a native trait in Thoreau, and persisted through life, though he was never a recluse, in the strict sense, even while he dwelt by Walden. Against a tendency that way there was always contending within him a love of social life and a turn for friendship. And his love of home and of family was perhaps the strongest and most persistent of his sentiments. Another native tendency, akin to that taste for retirement, was his love of simplicity in all the modes of life and in the style of writing. Upon this last topic I find a college "theme" of 1835, as follows: —

VIII. The Simple Style

"The Ways in which a Man's Style may be said to offend against Simplicity."

If we would aim at perfection in anything, Simplicity must not be overlooked. If the author would acquire literary fame, let him be careful to suggest such thoughts as are simple and obvious, and to express his meaning distinctly and in good language.

To do this, he must, in the first place, omit all superfluous ornament, which, though very proper in its place, — if, indeed, it can be said to have any in good composition, — tends rather to distract the mind, than to render a passage more clear and striking, or an idea more distinct. I do not pretend to say that whatever adds to the grace, detracts from the simplicity of one's style. The ancient robe [1] is the plainest dress imaginable, yet where will you find one more truly beautiful? It is equally so to the half-naked savage, and to the foppish devotee of fashion.

Another very common fault is that of using uncommon words, — words which neither render our meaning more obvious, nor our composition more elegant. In this case the reader's attention is withdrawn from the subject, and is wholly employed upon the rare, and for that reason offensive, expression, — offensive, too, because it argues study and premeditation in the author. Obscurity may properly be called the opposite of simplicity. Hence, whatever contributes to this, as far-fetched metaphors and images, — in fact, all that kind of ornament that forms the characteristic of the Florid Style, — is not merely superfluous, but absolutely incompatible with excellence.

The style in question does not seem to be peculiar to such topics as are common and familiar (as some have

[1] By "ancient robe" Thoreau evidently means the flowing garment of Greece and Rome, which at this time was brought much in evidence by the taste for Greek designs, and by the drawings of Retsch, Flaxman, and others, following the lead of Goethe. Thoreau followed Milton all his days, in preference to Shakespeare.

affirmed); for the most sublime and noblest precepts may be conveyed in a plain and simple strain. The Scriptures afford abundant proof of this. What images can be more natural, what sentiments of greater weight, and at the same time more noble and exalted, than those with which they abound? They possess no local or relative ornament which may be lost in a translation; clothed in whatever dress, they will retain their peculiar beauties. Here is simplicity itself. Every one allows this, every one admires it, — yet how few attain to it! What hosts of writers, hourly contending for popularity, depend for success on their superior simplicity of style alone? Shakespeare, they say, has thus acquired immortal fame, and this is the distinguishing trait in his writings. The union of wisdom and simplicity is plainly hinted at in the following lines by Milton: —

> "Suspicion sleeps
> At Wisdom's gate, and to *Simplicity*
> Resigns her charge."

Milton had long been a favorite among the Puritans of New England; together with Watts, he almost monopolized the religious interest of New England in poetry, until the graceful and witty common sense of Pope, and the serious sentiment of Young and Doddridge, in some degree displaced their popularity. Thoreau's interest in Milton, however, was largely a moral one, combining with his sense of that poet's exquisite appreciation of rural nature. A year or two later

than the essay just quoted Thoreau returned to this poet with two essays (one a fragment) which are worth quoting: —

IX. Characteristics of Milton's Poesy

"Point out particulars in the Speeches of Moloch and the rest (P.L., Book II) which appear to you Characteristic."

"After short silence, then,
And summons read, the great consult began."

Satan, Moloch, Belial, Mammon, and Beelzebub, "the flower of Heaven once" — but now the pride of Hell, successively harangue the assembly.

First Satan, "author of all ill," takes it upon himself to comfort himself and his mates and followers, by assuring them that all is not lost, that Heaven may yet be regained. Fit ruler of such a host! By showing them how good has already come out of evil, by refraining to dwell on their misfortunes, and appearing solicitous only to restore them to their former condition, — though in reality preferring "to reign in Hell rather than serve in Heaven," — he effectually revives their drooping energies, and proves himself the master-spirit of the host.

From the contents of the preceding book we should expect to observe in Satan's speech, ambition aided by matchless cunning: the former it was, that first suggested the revolt; and what but the latter could have so far carried his plans into execution? The poet has not failed to do his character justice in the present

instance. His speech is marked throughout by superior subtlety; and when at last the "devilish counsel," first proposed and in part devised by himself, is adopted, — the spirit of revenge which first prompted the undertaking, retires before self-interest, and gives place for a while to ambition. Proud, as it were, of this new responsibility, he declares that "none shall partake with him this enterprise"; and while they seek to render Hell more tolerable, reserves to himself the glory of their deliverance; thus proving himself both cunning to devise and prompt to execute.

What a contrast does Satan afford to the exasperated Moloch! Here is no dissimulation, no hellish craft, no nice calculation of chances, no ambition to shine; self-interest is swallowed up in revenge. Urged by despair, he counsels to scale the walls of Heaven, and oppose infernal thunder to the Almighty's engines. Danger he sees none, — but perhaps

"The way seems difficult, and steep to scale."

The difficulty is to get at the enemy. He is a "plain, blunt devil," who only speaks right on; no orator as Satan is; easily exasperated, but not so easily pacified, — the creature of impulse.

Next rose Belial, second to none in dissimulation, "nor yet behind in hate." With a fair outside, all is false and hollow within. As is often the case, his faint heart suggests a wise and prudent course; but he is none the less a devil, though a prudent one. Difficulties and dangers innumerable beset his path, — he thanks his stars that so much remains; dwells upon the

evils to be apprehended from obstinately persevering in a bad cause; and, closing, touches upon the effect of submission to appease the victor.

Next Mammon proves himself the same cool and deliberate calculator, who engrosses so large a share of Man's homage at the present day. War has no charms for him. Deficient neither in courage nor cunning, he is for adopting the readier and surer way to counteract the Almighty's vengeance by seeking to compose the present evils,

"Dismissing quite all thoughts of war."

Cui bono? is his motto. Though he looks only upon the dark side of the picture, when he speaks of the project to "dethrone the King of Heaven," it is the effect not of fear, or despair, but a worldly, or rather a hellish policy.

Beelzebub resembles in many respects his infernal master. His harangue breathes throughout a true Pandemonian spirit. The most consummate skill, the fiercest hate and a determined spirit of revenge mark him the devil of devils. He is the cool, the deliberate, the accomplished villain. Mischief is his element; he loves it for its own sake.

The skill with which Milton has adapted every part, and especially the opening of each harangue to the character of the speaker, is deserving of notice. Indeed, the first two or three lines are characteristic in each case, entirely, of the individual, — a perfect sample of the whole speech. This may have been the work of chance, but it certainly looks like design.

Satan begins his address in a formal and courtier-like manner: —

> "Powers and Dominions, Deities of Heaven!
> For, since no deep within her gulf can hold
> Immortal vigor, though oppressed and fallen,
> I give not Heaven for lost."

Here is a set speech, cut and dried, as it were, for the occasion. The commencement of the second line betrays a hidden purpose, — some proposition to be made, or project to be unfolded. The very indirectness with which the subject is introduced is a proof of design, a warning of craft to be used in the pursuit of a favorite object. Again, —

> "My sentence is for open war: of wiles,
> More unexpert, I boast not."

Here is a straightforwardness and singleness of purpose, a contempt of ornament and art. The first three words argue a mind made up. The indicative *is* simply declares his resolution; as if it only remained to make known what was already resolved. How different the following!

> "I *should be* much for open war, O Peers!
> As not behind in hate, *if*," etc.

A *should* and an *if* to begin with! The second word *should* implies hesitation; the *if* in the next line is a harbinger of fear and irresolution. Indeed, the whole speech is one string of interrogatories, plentifully sprinkled with words expressive of doubt and uncertainty, — such as could, would, should, yet, and or. Timidity is the mother of inquisitiveness.

Next Mammon spoke, —

> "Either to disenthrone the King of Heaven
> We war, if war be best, or to regain
> Our own right lost: —"

These words, it is true, express uncertainty as to the course to be pursued, yet it is the uncertainty, not of fear and despair, but of self-interest. The second line will not admit of any other interpretation. The manner in which the all-absorbing subject, war, is introduced, gives promise of a ready support in case war should be declared.

Beelzebub's elaborate exordium would by no means disgrace His Satanic Majesty, —

> "Thrones and Imperial Powers! Offspring of Heaven,
> Ethereal Virtues!"

He has evidently followed some such rule as that laid down by Cicero, — "Not to compose the introduction first, but to consider first the main argument, and let that suggest the exordium." Even in these few lines his resemblance to Satan, his ambitious master and ruler, is sufficiently obvious.

This essay breaks off abruptly, as if it had been left unfinished, or had lost portions of itself; as happened with the next one, — of which only those pages were left of which the author's later judgment approved.

X. Milton's L'Allegro and Il Penseroso
Fragments of a Volunteer Essay

(This seems to have been a paper written for some college society, and not at the request of the professor or class tutor. Of its fourteen pages only the fifth and ninth, with the eleventh to the fourteenth, inclusive (six in all), were left intact; the first four pages have two thirds of their contents torn away; while of the seventh and eighth more than half is gone. Thus nearly a third is missing. What remains runs well together and is worth preserving, as a genial interpretation of the two charming youthful poems of Milton, and an indication that Thoreau had read before January, 1837, the other authors named, — or enough of them to understand their tone and drift. Six months before graduating (the inscribed date), he was nineteen and a half years old.)

The precise date of these poems is not known; probably, however, they were, together with his "Comus" and "Lycidas," the fruit of those five years of literary leisure, from 1632 to 1637, which our author is known to have spent at Horton in Buckinghamshire. They were first published in 1645; but for nearly a century obtained but little notice from the lovers of polite literature, — the Addisons and Popes of the day. They are thought by Dr. Warton to have been indebted

to Handel's music for whatever notice they at last obtained.

"L'Allegro" is not an *effort* of poetic genius; but rather an outpouring of poetic feeling. We have here a succession of pleasing and striking images, which are dwelt upon just long enough. The metre is admirably adapted to the subject. The reader can hardly believe he is not one of the party tripping it over hill and dale "on the light fantastic toe." A verse of poetry should strike the reader as it did the poet, — as a whole, — not so much the sign of an idea as that idea itself.

> "As Imagination bodies forth
> The forms of things unknown, the Poet's pen
> Turns them to shapes."

The parts and members of his verses are equally appropriate and striking. With the idea comes the very word; if its sense is not wanted, its sound is.

Lo! the sun is up, the hounds are out; the plowman has already driven his team afield, and as he gaily treads the fragrant furrow, his merry whistle is heard the fields around, responsive to the milkmaid's song, — who now repairs with pail on head and quick elastic step, to her humble toil. The mower, too, has commenced his labors in the meadow at hand, —

> "And every shepherd tells his tale
> Under the hawthorn in the dale."

Such a picture of rural felicity as is presented in these and the following lines is rarely to be met with even in poetry. Fancy has her hands full, — a thousand images are flitting before her, bringing with

them a crowd of delightful associations; and she is forced, in spite of herself, to join the revel and thread the mazes of the dance.

Johnson has well observed in his biographical notice of Milton, — "No mirth can indeed be found in his melancholy, but I am afraid that I always meet some melancholy in his mirth." His mirth wears a pensive hue; his melancholy is but a pleasing contemplative mood. The transition from "L'Allegro" to "Il Penseroso" is by no means abrupt; the vain deluding joys which are referred to are not those "unreproved pleasures" which the poet has just recorded, — for they are by no means inconsistent with that soft melancholy which he paints; but they are rather the fickle pensioners of that Euphrosyne, whose sister graces are Meat and Drink, — a very different crew from that which waits upon the "daughter fair" of Zephyr and Aurora. The latter are content with daylight and a moderate portion of the night: when tales are done, —

> "To bed they creep,
> By whispering winds soon lulled asleep."

But the others proceed to evening amusements, and even to the London theatres, and the "well-trod stage," — but only

> "If Jonson's learned sock be on,
> Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
> Warble his native wood-notes wild."

Beginning with the warning to idle joys, that they depart and leave the poet to "divinest Melancholy," we soon come to that picture of her, perhaps the finest

in the whole poem. A sable stole drawn over her decent shoulders, with slow and measured steps, and looks that hold "sweet converse with the skies," reflecting a portion of their own placidness, she gradually draws near. But lo! the Cherub Contemplation delays her lingering steps; her eyes upraised to Heaven, the earth is for a space forgot. Time loiters on his course, were it for but a moment; Past, Present, and Future mingle as one.

[Here a lacuna.]

The picture of Morning in "Il Penseroso" differs greatly from that in "L'Allegro," and introduces that mention of the storm-wind in a cloudy day, —

"When rocking winds are piping loud," —

a very poetic touch. A later poet, Thomson, attributes the melancholy sighing of the wind to "the sad Genius of the coming storm." Gray, too, seems to have been equally affected by it. "Did you never observe," he writes, "that pause, as the gust is re-collecting itself, and rising upon the ear in a shrill and plaintive tone, like the swell of an Æolian harp? I do assure you there is nothing in the world so like the voice of a spirit."

We are told that it was while exposed to a violent storm of wind and rain, attended by frequent flashes of lightning, among the wilds of Glen Ker, that Burns composed his far-famed song, —

"Scots wha hae with Wallace bled."

Ossian was the child of the storm; its music was ever grateful to his ear. Hence his poetry breathes through-

out a tempestuous spirit, — when read, as it should be, at the still hour of night, the very rustling of a leaf, stirred by the impatient reader, seems to his excited imagination the fitful moanings of the wind, or sighings of the breeze.

But if Milton's winds rock, they pipe also. Even the monotony of a summer shower is relieved by the cheerful pattering of "minute drops from off the eaves"; and if the heavens are for a few moments overcast, the splendors of the succeeding sunshine are heightened by the contrast.

It is amusing to know that Milton was a performer on the bass-viol. He is said even to have been a composer, though nothing remains to prove the assertion. It was his practice, say his biographers, when he had dined, to play on some musical instrument and make his wife sing, or sing himself. She, he said, had a good voice but no ear.

This partiality for the sister Muses is nowhere more manifest than in these two poems. Whether in a mirthful or a pensive mood, the linked sweetness of "soft Lydian airs," the "pealing organ" or the "full voiced quire," dissolves him into ecstasies.

These poems are to be valued, if for no other reason, on account of the assistance they afford us in forming our estimate of the man Milton. They place him in an entirely new and extremely pleasing light to the reader who was previously familiar with him as the author of the "Paradise Lost" alone. If we venerated, we may now admire and love him. The immortal Milton seems for a space to have put on mortality; to have

snatched a moment from the weightier cares of Heaven and Hell, to wander for a while among the sons of men. But we mistake; though his wings (as he tells us) were already sprouted, he was content as yet to linger awhile, with childlike affection, amid the scenes of his native Earth.

The tenor of these verses is in keeping with the poet's early life; he was, as he confesses, a reader of romances, an occasional frequenter of the playhouse, and not at all averse to spending a cheerful evening now and then with some kindred spirits about Town. We see nothing here of the Puritan. The "storied windows," which were afterward such an abomination in his eyes, admit a welcome, though sombre light. The learning of Jonson and the wild notes of Shakespeare are among the last resources of the mirthful "L'Allegro."

The student of Milton will ever turn with satisfaction from contemplating the stern nonconformist, and the bold and consistent defender of civil and religious liberty, engaged, but not involved, in a tedious and virulent controversy, —

"With darkness and with dangers compassed round," —

his dearest hopes disappointed, and himself shut out from the "cheerful light of day," — to these fruits of his earlier and brighter years. Though of the earth, yet were they the flights of one who was contemplating to soar

"Above the Aonian mount," —

a heavenward and unattempted course.

I have not undertaken to write a critique. I have dwelt upon the poet's beauties, and not so much as glanced at his blemishes. This may be the result of pure selfishness. Poetry is but a recreation. A pleasing image or a fine sentiment loses none of its charms, though Burton or Beaumont and Fletcher, or Marlowe or Sir Walter Raleigh, may have written something very similar, or even, in another connection, have used the identical word whose aptness we so much admire. That always appeared to me a contemptible kind of criticism, which can deliberately, and in cold blood, dissect the sublimest passage, and take pleasure in the detection of slight verbal incongruities. It was, when applied to Milton, little better than sacrilege; and those critics who condescended to practise it, were to be ranked with the parish officers who, prompted by a profane and mercenary spirit, tore from their grave, and exposed for sale, what were imagined to be the remains of Milton.

This is, in fact, an appreciation rather than a criticism, and one of high merit. So far as it goes, there are hardly better passages in the essays of Dr. Channing and of Emerson on Milton, in this same decade of 1830–40. Thoreau's mention in it of the pseudo-Ossian of Macpherson, shows that he, like Napoleon and Lamartine, was early interested in that mingling of sublimity and fustian which the canny Highlander imposed on the world, from his imperfect readings of Gaelic origi-

nals among the folk-lore poems in Scotch and Irish verse about Fingal and his heroes. While living at New York in 1843 Thoreau found in a library the "Genuine Remains" of Ossian. He made much use of them in a lecture on Poetry which he was then writing for the Concord Lyceum, where he delivered it late in November, 1843. Some of this came out in the "Week" in 1849.

Once entered upon topics of literature, Thoreau was in his right path; it was an easy one, and his essays grew longer, as those of the Seniors are wont to be. It was not so common then to crowd the college course with electives, or "voluntaries" as they were called in Thoreau's day; although he appears to have chosen more than was then the customary number. He left Cambridge more or less qualified to read and write Greek, Latin, French, German, Italian, and Spanish; and his English reading had become unusually extensive. Here is an essay on a complex subject, such as Professor Channing delighted to give, — one, too, that, if dealt with fairly, required much reading by the student.

XI. National and Individual Genius

"Show how it is that a Writer's Nationality and Individual Genius may be fully manifested in a Play or other Literary Work, upon a Foreign or Ancient Subject, — and yet full Justice be done to the Subject."

Man has been called "a bundle of habits." This truth, I imagine, was the discovery of a philosopher, — one who spoke as he thought and thought before he spoke, — who realized it, and felt it to be, as it were, literally true. It has a deeper meaning, and admits of a wider application than is generally allowed. The various bundles which we label French, English and Scotch *men*, differ only in this, — that while the first is made up of gay, showy and fashionable habits, — the second is crowded with those of a more sombre hue, bearing the stamp of utility and comfort; and the contents of the third, it may be, are as rugged and unyielding as their very envelope. The color and texture of these contents vary with different bundles; but the material is uniformly the same.

Man is an abstract and general term; it denotes the genus, — French, English, Scotch, etc., — are but the differentiæ. It is with the genus alone that the philosopher and poet have to do. Where, then, shall they study it? As well here as there, surely, if it be everywhere the same; one may as well view the moon from Mount Ætna as from the Andes; her phenomena will be equally obvious, his map equally correct, whatever the point from which he observed her.

But he must look through a national glass. It may be desirable, indeed, to see clearly with the naked eye; we should then need no astronomers; yet the same glass, since a glass we must use, will afford us an equally accurate view, whatever station we choose. If our view be affected at all by the quality of the instrument, the effect will be constant and uniform, though our observatories be rolled about upon wheels.

It would seem then, that an author's nationality may be equally obvious, and yet full justice be done to his subject, whether that subject be an ancient or modern, foreign or domestic one. By "full justice" I mean that he may do all he intended to do, or that any one can reasonably expect or require. Nay, further, that nationality may be even more striking in treating of a foreign than a domestic subject; since what is peculiar and national in the writer, by the side of what is real history and matter of fact in the description, will be made the more manifest by the contrast. What is peculiar in the French character will sooner appear in a book of travels than a domestic diary; in his descriptions of foreign scenes and customs the Frenchman himself will be the most conspicuous object. Suppose him to weave these materials into a novel or poem, — to introduce his innkeeper or postilion, — he is fully adequate to his task; he has only to learn particulars. His must be an inductive method, — the phenomena he observes are to be referred to a general law.

Is human nature our study, — the humanity of the

Romans, for instance, — we ourselves, our friends, the community, are our best text-books. We wish to paint, perhaps, the old Roman courtier; so far as we know anything of him, we know him as a man; as possessing in a greater or less degree, the same faults and virtues that we observe in men of modern times. Does he possess different ones, he is a sealed book to us. He is no longer one of us; we can no more conceive of him, describe him, class him, than the naturalist can class or conceive of, — he knows not what; an animal, it may be, — but he neither walks, swims nor flies, — eats, drinks nor sleeps, and yet lives.

I come now to speak of that peculiar structure and bent of mind which distinguishes an individual from his nation. Much that has already been said will apply equally well to this part of our subject. In a play or poem the author's individual genius is distinguished by the points of character he seizes upon, and the features most fondly dwelt upon, as well as the peculiar combination he delights in, and the general effect of his picture. Into his idea of his fellow enters one half himself; he views his subject only through himself, and strange indeed would it be, did not the portrait betray the medium through which the original was observed. As the astronomer must use his own eyes, though he looks through a *national* glass, not only are we to consider the quality of the lens, but also the condition of the observer's visual organs. A defect in his sight will not be made up for by distance, — will be equally evident, whether it be the instrument itself or the star to which it points, that is subjected to his scrutiny.

To read history with advantage one must possess, we are told, a vivid imagination, that he may in a measure realize and enter into the spirit of the story, so as to make himself familiar with the scenes and characters there described. Every one is differently impressed, and each impression bears the stamp of the individual's taste and genius. One seizes greedily upon circumstances which another neglects; one associates with an event those scenes which witnessed it, — one grasps the ludicrous, another the marvellous; and thus, when the taste and judgment come to weave these conceptions into poetry, their identity is not lost. Here, then, surely, one's individual genius is fully manifested.

The original "Sweet Auburn" has been ascertained to be Lishoy in the county of Westmeath, Ireland. Though Goldsmith intended to represent an English village, he took from Lishoy, says his biographer, "only such traits and characteristics as might be applied to village life in England, and modified them accordingly. He took what belonged to human nature in rustic life, and adapted it to the allotted scene. In the same way a painter takes his models from real life around him, even when he would paint a foreign or a classic group." We may suppose Goldsmith to have written this justly celebrated poem in the Irish village named, where he passed his youth. Many of his observations apply rather, in their full extent, to an Irish than an English village; but this is a difference not in kind, but degree. The desolation which was the subject of these verses was by no means confined to his native country.

"Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates and men decay," —

alas! a truth but too universal in its application.

Has not this author done full justice to his subject? Let the popularity of his poem answer. Goldsmith is visible in every line. As to his nationality, I will only add that the hypercritical have discovered that many of his descriptions "savor more of the rural scenery and rustic life of an English than an Irish village"; which is proof enough that what is national makes no mean figure in the "Deserted Village." D'Israeli, speaking of Dante, observes; "Every great genius is influenced by the objects and feelings which occupy his own times, — only differing from the race of his brothers by the magical force of his developments; the light he sends forth over the world he often catches from the faint and unobserved spark which will die away and turn to nothing in another hand."

So confident were his commentators that his "Inferno" was but an earthly hell after all, that the poem had no sooner appeared than they set about tracing its original; which, satisfactorily to their own minds, they finally discovered. His biographer relates that in the year 1304, among the novel and diverse sports on an occasion of public rejoicing, one was, the representation of the Infernal regions upon a stage of boats on the Arno at Florence. This, he adds, was the occasion of the "Inferno." Dante himself has remarked, "I found the original of my hell in the world which we inhabit."

Shakespeare is justly styled the "poet of nature"; here was the secret of his popularity. His was no ideal

standard, — man was his hobby. It was one of the characteristics of his genius that it adapted itself to the reality of things, and was on familiar terms with our feelings. His characters are men, though historically faulty, yet humanly true; domesticated at once, they are English in all but the name.

Now this characteristic is capable of being made equally manifest, whether his genius be employed upon an ancient or modern, foreign or domestic subject. He is as much the poet of nature in the one case as in the other, — in describing a Roman as a London mob; in Antony's speech over the dead body of Cæsar, as in the character of Falstaff. Were Antony Percy, and Percy Antony, —

> "There were an Antony
> Would ruffle up your spirits," —

and exert perhaps as magical an influence over the wounds of Cæsar and the stones of Rome as did the true Roman orator.

We are told by one author (Pope) that "Invention is one of the great characteristics of the genius of Shakespeare." Yet he asks —

> "What can we reason but from what we know?"

This separating Invention from Imagination, as he does, seems altogether unnecessary, — as another remarks, "seems to be merely dividing the included from the including term."

It may be, as Johnson has observed, that "Shakespeare's adherence to the real story and to Roman manners has impeded the natural vigor of his genius";

he may have been confined, but he was no less Shakespeare; though chained he was not tamed. We are not to compare Shakespeare chained with Shakespeare at liberty, but Shakespeare in chains with others in the same condition. A caravan is made up of animals as distinct in their nature and habits as their fellows of the forest. I question, in the next place, whether our Poet's powers of Imagination are less manifest when employed upon an ancient or foreign subject. Take, for instance, one of the most powerful passages of his "Julius Cæsar," beginning —

> "But yesterday the word of Cæsar might
> Have stood against the world: now lies he there,
> And none so poor to do him reverence.
> O masters! if I were disposed to stir
> Your hearts and minds to mutiny and rage,
> I should do Brutus wrong, and Cassius wrong, —
> Who, you all know, are honorable men," etc.

What is there foreign in the sentiment here? To be sure, the word "Cæsar" occurs thrice, "Brutus" and "Cassius" each once; but they were no impediment, — no more so, at least, than "Hotspur" or "Macbeth" would have been. The individual is merged in the man.

Is it answered that in the latter case the character will be well known, and therefore the poet will feel more at ease, more at home, and under less restraint? I answer, this very familiarity, though a desideratum with the biographer, may prove a hindrance to the poet; facts are so many guideboards, confining him to a beaten track and leaving no room for Imagination.

Some talk as if this faculty, wearied by a flight to so

distant a scene, would be unable to exhibit its accustomed fertility and vigor: or among so many strange scenes and faces, being overcome by feelings of homesickness and loneliness, would lose a great portion of its energy and creative power. But this objection is far from applying to Shakespeare. He was, as we say, never less alone than when alone. Fortunately, his familiarity with Roman history was not so remarkable as to multiply guideboards to a troublesome degree; or supersede the necessity of his judging for himself, or hazarding a conjecture now and then. Shakespeare is Shakespeare, whether at home or abroad.

This is what in the dialect of Harvard was called a "forensic," — implying a discussion in which the student took sides and argued a case; and though the questions offered were frequently trivial or fantastic, they would serve, as in this example, to bring out the subtlety and love of contradiction which mingled with Thoreau's clear, analytic judgment and strong moral sense. It is perhaps the longest essay in which he considered Shakespeare, then, as now, a topic for many essays, and a favorite theme of the Concord authors. Thoreau had also begun to read Italian, and had strayed into Dante, though his favorite poet then was Tasso.

The frequent quotations from Goldsmith and Johnson show how completely the English liter-

ature of the eighteenth century was mastered by New England; which was so little acquainted with German books that neither John Adams nor Jefferson, by 1820, knew Goethe even by name, though John Quincy Adams had become so well read in German that, a dozen years earlier, he had versified in English the whole of Wieland's "Oberon." A few young Americans — Edward Everett, George Bancroft, George Ticknor, William Emerson, George Calvert, etc. — had made German literature known at Harvard College and the Round Hill School; and Carlyle and young Henry Hedge and George Ripley had made the study of German attractive to Mrs. Ripley and Henry Thoreau in Waltham and Concord.

Before the forensic just noticed was written, Thoreau had more concisely considered Imagination in its moral aspect as worthy or unworthy of special culture; and had dwelt on the story-making faculty, the "*Lust zu fabuliren*" so dear to the childhood of men and of the race. Two rather fragmentary essays follow.

XII. Imagination as an Element of Happiness

"Whether the Cultivation of the Imagination conduces to the Happiness of the Individual?"

Man is an intellectual being. Without the least hesi-

tation, as well as from the most careful investigation (if indeed there be any question about it), we are led to conclude that the Intellect is to be cultivated. Indeed, the doubt, if any exist, cannot be solved without the exercise, and consequently the cultivation of the intellectual faculties. We could not, if we would, put a stop entirely and effectually, to their gradual expansion and development, without offering violence to the organs through which they act.

It is obviously inconsistent with the design of the Creator, as observed in the works of creation, that Man, made capable of comprehending the object of his existence, and of understanding the relation in which he stands to its Author, should so far neglect the culture of his peculiar faculties, as to lose his peculiar privileges as a free agent. The wisdom of the Creator has ever been the theme of the Christian's admiration and praise; shall then wisdom for a man's self be rejected? In supplying his physical wants Man but obeys the dictates of Nature's law; shall the intellectual be neglected? If Reason was given us for any one purpose more than another, it was that we might so regulate our conduct as to ensure our eternal happiness. The cultivation of the mind, then, is conducive to our happiness. But this consists in the cultivation of its several faculties.

What we call the Imagination is one of these faculties; hence does its culture conduce in a measure to the happiness of the individual. The Imagination, says Dugald Stewart, "is the power that gives birth to the productions of the poet and the painter"; whose prov-

ince it is, says another, "to select the parts of different conceptions, or objects of memory, to form a whole more pleasing, more terrible, or more awful than has ever been presented in the ordinary course of nature," — a power by no means peculiar to the poet or the painter.

Whatever the senses perceive or the mind takes cognizance of, affords food for the Imagination. In whatever situation a man may be placed, to whatever straits he may be reduced, this faculty is ever busy. Its province is unbounded, its flights are not confined to space; the past and the future, time and eternity all come within the sphere of its range. This power, almost coeval with Reason itself, is a fruitful source of terror to the child. This it is that suggests to his mind the idea of an invisible monster, lying in wait to carry him off, in the obscurity of the night. Whether acquired or not, it is obviously susceptible of a high degree of cultivation. This fact goes to prove what was already so evident. Indeed, there are the same objections to the cultivation of any other faculty of the intellect as to the one in question.

The mind itself should receive only its due share of attention; but should the physical powers be neglected, the fault would rather be a negative than a positive one. So, too, the mind *alone* should be well-balanced; no one power should be cultivated to the neglect of any power. It is no objection to the study of Mathematics to say that an exclusive devotion to that branch is sure to render one unfit for the duties of life. Properly speaking, a faculty of the mind cannot be culti-

vated to excess, — the fault lies in the neglect of some other power. The arm of the smith is not too strong for his body; he would be wrong to lay aside the hammer and relax the muscles, lest the right arm outstrip the left.

There is one other consideration which seems to affect this question. Unlike most other pleasures, those of the Imagination are not momentary and evanescent; its powers are rather increased than worn out by exercise. The old, not less than the young, find their supreme delight in the building of cob-houses and air-castles out of these fragments of different conceptions. It is not so with the pleasures of sense.

XIII. The Story-Telling Faculty

"The Love of Stories, real or fabulous, in Young and Old; account for it, and show what good use it may serve."

One thing can hardly be called more curious than another; yet all are not equally the objects of our curiosity. The earth we tread upon is as curious as the stars we gaze at. "To the thinking mind," says Irving, "the whole world is enveloped in mystery, and everything is full of type and portent." *We* are curiously and wonderfully made, — yet how few, comparatively, see anything to admire in the structure of their own bodies! How then shall we account for this indifference to what is common, this appetite for the novel?

By accident, through the medium of the senses

first, the child is made acquainted with some new truth. The acquisition of Knowledge (taking the term in its widest sense) he finds is attended in this first instance, by a pleasurable emotion. The wisdom of this provision is obvious. Having experienced the pleasure, and noted, whether voluntarily or otherwise, the cause, he delights to examine whatever new objects may fall in his way: and thus familiar things, or such as he has already taken notice of, come to lose their attractions, and grow in a measure disgusting to him. Hence that love of novelty, that passion for what is strange, or, as the phrase goes, *remarkable*, whose influence may be discerned in almost every act of our lives. But it by no means follows that those topics most replete with instruction will afford us the greatest pleasure.

The love of novelty grows with our growth. Not satisfied with the world around us, we delight to revel in a world of our own creation. The ideas afforded by sensation and reflection are seized upon with avidity by the Imagination, and so combined and arranged as to form new wholes of surpassing beauty, awfulness or sublimity, — as the case may be. It is in the exercise of this divine faculty that Age finds its readiest solace, and Youth its supreme delight. A mutual interchange of imaginings serves not a little to enlarge the field of our enjoyment. Tired of our own creations; too indolent to rear our own castles, the Tale well told, —

> "with many a winding bout
> Of linked sweetness long drawn out," —

casts a luxurious, a delicious twilight over the rugged scenes of life, — reconciles us to the world, to our friends, — ourselves.

As that appetite is insatiable, so are the sources whence it may be gratified inexhaustible. When youth has ripened into manhood, and Care has stamped the brow, — though the lay may have lost its charm, which tells of curious things, —

> How wise men three of Gotham, in a bowl
> Did venture out to sea, —
> And darkly hints their awful fate; —

though this be an old story,[1] the page of History is never closed, the Castalian Spring is never dry. The volume of Nature is ever open; the story of the world never ceases to interest. The child, enchanted by the melodies of Mother Goose, — the scholar pondering "the Tale of Troy Divine," and the historian breathing the atmosphere of past ages, — all manifest the same passion, are alike the creatures of curiosity.

In fine, the same passion for the novel (somewhat modified, to be sure) that is manifested in our early days, leads us in after-life, when the sprightliness and credulity of youth have given way to the reserve and skepticism of manhood — to the more serious, though scarcely less wonderful annals of the world.

Whatever is said or done, seen or heard, — is in any way taken cognizance of by the senses or the understanding, — produces its effect, contributes its mite, to the formation of the character. Every sentence that is framed, every word that is uttered, is

[1] See the like thought on p. 59.

framed or uttered, for good or for evil; nothing is lost. No auldwife's story is so trivial or so barren as to lack a moral; nor is the impression it makes as transitory as "the tale that is told."

These trifling but oft-recurring contributions are, so to speak, the principles of our principles, — the underpropping of that moral edifice whose spire pierces the clouds, and points the way to that glorious Elysium beyond, the blessed habitation of the Immortals.

The love of Stories and of story-telling cherishes a purity of heart, a frankness and candor of disposition, a respect for what is generous and elevated, — a contempt for what is mean and dishonorable, — a proper regard *for* and independence *of* the petty trials of life; and tends to multiply merry companions and never-failing friends.

The fluency and enthusiasm of this essay recalls to mind that accurate description by Channing of Thoreau's personality, in which he specifies: —

Eyes expressive of all shades of feeling, but never weak or near-sighted; the forehead, not unusually broad or high, full of concentrated energy and purpose; the mouth with prominent lips, pursed up with meaning and thought when silent; and giving out when open *a stream of the most varied and unusual and instructive sayings.*

Such also was the nature of his writings — varied, unusual, and instructive, beyond those of most men of his time, and placing him in the same

rank with Carlyle, Emerson, and Whitman for originality. How early these traits showed themselves in his youthful essays will be seen in this volume, as distinctly, if not so constantly, as in his own later writings; comparatively few of which had the advantage of his own editing. He began to edit early, by tearing out and destroying much that he had carefully composed; but final editing he mainly missed.

CHAPTER IV

COLLEGE ESSAYS (*concluded*)

Literary and Moral, Including the Minor Morals

It is thus far evident that Henry Thoreau, from his earliest years, had been interested in literature, and had read copiously, with such access to books as the small libraries in a small town like Concord, eighty years ago, had been able to furnish. In Harvard College he found a larger library, though it was not to be compared with such as now exist in our universities and cities. The early American students at German universities had caused the introduction in the Eastern States of the better specimens of German literature; and exiles from Germany and from Italy had imparted a taste for the older literatures of the Continental countries. Henry as a youth profited by this; but still more by the reviving taste for the Elizabethan poetry and drama, and the activity of the Scotch and Irish writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. He used such libraries as he found, not to cram for college rank, or for prizes at school or university, — but because of his early and constant devotion to general literature in its many

branches. An essay written by him in March, 1837, will indicate how wide and general his reading had become before he was twenty.

XIV. Books and their Titles

"Name and speak of Titles of Books, either as pertinent to their Matter, or merely Ingenious and Attractive."

When at length, after infinite toil and anxiety, an author has fairly completed his work, the next, and by far the most important concern that demands his attention is the christening. He is about to send forth his bantling to seek its fortune in the world; and he feels a kind of parental interest in its welfare, prompting him to look about for some expressive and euphonic Title, which at least will secure it a civil treatment from mankind, and may perchance serve as an introduction to their sincere esteem and regard.

A Title may either be characteristic, consisting of a single expressive word or pithy sentence, or ingenious and amusing, so as to catch the fancy or excite the curiosity. Some (such as "Ivanhoe," for instance,) although familiarity with its contents may impart to them an interest not their own, or other associations render them pleasing to the ear, — seem to have been adopted as merely or chiefly distinctive; without any attempt to enlighten the reader upon the nature of the subject, or to deceive him into a perusal of the volume. In the infancy of a nation's literature, when books, like angel's visits, are "few and far

between," their very rarity seems to require that they should be distinguished by titles equally rare; and not unusually does it happen that these prove so exceedingly attractive as to cast quite into the shade the humble volume which they were intended to usher into notice.

The character of the contents is often quite overlooked in the desire to make a favorable first impression; and the author's whole ingenuity is exerted in the framing of some fanciful or dignified Title, which will at once recommend his book to the favor of the reading public. As some fond parents in the lower walks of life are accustomed to ransack the long list of departed worthies for sonorous and well-tried names; or from the cast-off spoils of the novel-heroine seek to swell the scanty portion which Fortune has allotted to their offspring.

What can be more alluring than the following tempting and somewhat luxurious display of verbal delicacies?

"Paradise of Dainty Devices."

What may be the nature of these "Dainty Devices" is left to be imagined by the reader, — it being safer to leave him to his own vague conjectures than to tell the plain truth at once. Robert Langland, a contemporary of Chaucer, taught the fundamental doctrines of Christianity in a voluminous poetical work, entitled "Pierce the Ploughman's Crede." One William is overtaken by sleep among the Malvern Hills, and in a dream beholds the different classes of society pursuing their respective avocations upon a spacious

plain before him. He is addressed by various allegorical personages, among whom True Religion and Reason are the most conspicuous. By Piers Plowman is sometimes meant the "true and universal Church"; at others he is a mysterious personage who undertakes to guide mankind to the abode of Truth, — declaring that he has himself long been Truth's faithful and devoted follower.

Where the uninitiated reader would expect a rude pastoral or rural ditty, or perhaps an essay on husbandry, nothing is found to repay him for the trouble of a perusal but obscure and interminable allegories,

> "In notes with many a winding bout
> Of linked *dulness* long drawn out."

Southwell's "Funeral Tears" is another title of the same description. The following gives one a slight insight into the subject, "Abuses Stript and Whipt" — being a volume of satirical essays; in later times, "Heliconia," a selection of English poetry of the Elizabethan age, and "Archaica," a reprint of scarce "Old English Prose Tracts," by Sir Edgerton Brydges. Davy's "Salmonia," which must have puzzled many, is also of this description. Our early literature abounds in such conceited titles as the following: "A Ladder of Perfection," "A Looking-Glass for London and England," "A Fan to drive away Flies," and "Matches lighted by the Divine Fire."

One author, through an excess of modesty or squeamishness, calls a discourse upon the life and death of an individual, an "Epitaph"; another has

packed off a quarto with an inexplicable (and therefore attractive) title, — "Prayse of the Red Herring." Our ancestors were fond of regarding their works as so many different centres, from which diverged rays of various hues, carrying light and heat to every quarter, — as choice repositories of learning, or perennial fountains of amusement; and therefore, overlooking their general character, gave them collective titles, taken, for the most part, from the analogy of matter. Some such have already been mentioned. "Painter's Palace of Pleasure," "Temple of Memory," "Coryat's Crudities," etc., are other instances. We may also add, "Mirror for Magistrates," — a rather odd title for a chronicle History, written during the reign of Queen Mary, and embracing "The Lives and untimely Falles of unfortunate Princes and men of note," from Brutus down.

Not even sober philosophical and grammatical works have escaped the absurdity of unintelligible and affected titles. Horne Tooke's "Diversions of Purley" must have disappointed many a desultory reader in search of amusement. The difficulty is not removed by the addition of the poetical expletive, "Epea Pteroenta."

The student has heard of this celebrated treatise, and he feels a desire to examine it. He has recourse, perhaps, to the catalogue of some library, which informs him merely that John Horne Tooke was the author of a book called "The Diversions of Purley." He is somewhat astonished that so learned a philologist as Mr. Tooke should have condescended to dab-

ble in light literature, or have sacrificed a moment in amusements or diversions of any kind.

It cannot be that he is mistaken. Mr. Tooke was certainly the author of the work he is in quest of. Perhaps those ill-starred Diversions, however, may contain a biographical notice of their author, which will throw some light upon the subject. He examines and is undeceived. Instead of a Dictionary of Sports, or a Panegyric on the Delights of Rural Life, he finds a critical treatise on the English language, displaying no small degree of philological learning.

No people have been more prone to these extravagances than the Persians. Mohammad Ebn Emir Chowand Shah, who flourished in 1741, was the author of a voluminous historical work entitled "Hortus Puritatis in Historia Prophetarum, Regum et Chalifarum." A Persian-Turkish dictionary bears the title of "Naamet Allah" or "Delight of Gods." "The Gulistan," or "Flower-Garden," a collection of moral fables and apophthegms, by Sheikh Sadi of Shiraz, being written in an excessively florid style, may aptly enough be compared to a garden of flowers, or a parcel of nosegays. We next come upon the ground of the "Lebtarik or Marrow of History," by the immortal (so far as his name is concerned) Al Emir Yahia Ebn Abdolatif al Kaswini. Abu Said wrote a universal history from Adam to his own time, under the title of a "Historical Pearl Necklace."

Revolutions have not been confined to political institutions and forms of government; not even old Books nor old Clothes have escaped the all-grasping

hand of reform. Men have learned that "All is not gold that glisters." Books have cast off their gaudy and cumbrous court dresses, and appear, in these days, in a plain Republican garb. The works of the philosopher, the poet and the statesman carry no recommendation upon their backs; nor does a discouraging array of clasps compel the faint-hearted reader to rely upon outward appearances. Indeed their Titles, should a perusal warrant it, are concealed by an everyday dress of paper; while their contents are equally accessible to all. It is not a little remarkable that so few really valuable works have anything to recommend them in their externals.

Here we come upon the first indication of that interest in Persian and Oriental literature which for years was so noticeable in the writings of Thoreau, as in those of Emerson. Quite possibly Emerson had inspired this taste in his young townsman, whom he in this year began to know as a keeper of Journals and a thinker of thoughts. The anecdote is familiar, and I had it from more than one authority, but I will relate it as Emerson himself gave it to me, in one of those many conversations in which Thoreau was the topic.

My first intimacy with Henry began after his graduation in 1837. Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Emerson's sister from Plymouth, then boarded with Mrs. Thoreau and her children in the Parkman house, where the

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Library now stands, and saw the young people every day. She would bring me verses of Henry's, — the "Sic Vita," for instance, which he had thrown into Mrs. Brown's window, tied round a bunch of violets gathered in his walk, — and once a passage out of his Journal, which he had read to Sophia, who spoke of it to Mrs. Brown as resembling a passage in one of my Concord lectures. He always looked forward to authorship as his work in life, and fitted himself for that. Finding he could write prose so well, — and he talked equally well, — he soon gave up much verse-writing, in which he was not patient enough to make his lines smooth and flowing.

Thoreau's own opinion was not exactly the same on that point. He told me in his last illness that he had destroyed many of his early verses because Emerson criticised them; this he had since regretted, for perhaps they were better than his friend had thought them. Some of these lost verses seem to have been preserved by friends to whom he had given them in their early forms; and in different connections from those in which he afterwards preserved stanzas that he thought good enough to print. I shall have more to say on this matter of verse-writing, when I come to speak of his published verses, — many of which Emerson would have withheld from publication.

It may be remarked, in passing, that the Arabic

or Persian custom of styling a collection of short, serious pieces a "Flower-Garden" has its example in Greek literature, though perhaps borrowed from the Semitic races. The famous Greek Anthology was meant to be a flower-garland of verses; and it began with a small collection made by Meleager of Galilee; and that monk of the Jordan Valley, John Moschus, who collected ten score of monkish legends in the seventh Christian century, called his quaint prose anthology a "*Leimonarion*," or "Flowery Meadow," — in Latin, "Pratum Spirituale"; a work as popular before A.D. 1200, as the "Fioretti" of St. Francis were after that date. Thoreau would have rejoiced in John Moschus, if he had but known him; and so would Emerson; they got no nearer to him than to Synesius, who is one of the characters in one of John's folk-tales of the fifth Christian century.

A year before the essay last given (March, 1836) Thoreau produced and preserved an essay on —

XV. American Literature

"Advantages and Disadvantages of Foreign Influence on American Literature."

The nations of the Old World have each a literature peculiarly its own. Theirs is the growth of cen-

turies; successive ages have contributed to form its character and mould its features. They may be said to have grown up and become matured; the early centuries of our Era presided over their infancy; and in some instances their origins may be traced back far into the fabulous ages that precede the foundation of Rome.

Spain is the land of Romance; the character of her literature may be seen in that of almost every century of her history; her youth was passed in deeds of chivalry, or dozed away in the luxurious halls of the Alhambra. The taste for knight-errantry, for adventure and song, which forms the characteristics of her maturer years, is but a spice of the Moorish character. France has had her troubadours; and her vintager still sings his evening hymn. The advancement of her literary interests was made a public concern as early as 1634, when Cardinal de Richelieu, the founder of the French Academy, reigned with despotic sway, not only over the King, court and people, but also over the language.

We of New England are a peculiar people: we whistle, to be sure, our national tune; but the character of our literature is not yet established. Ours is still in the gristle, and is yet receiving those impressions from the parent literature of the mother-country which are to mould its character. Utility is the rallying word with us; we are a nation of speculators, stockholders and money-changers. We do everything by steam, because it is most expeditious, and cheapest in the long run; we are continually racking our brains to

invent a quicker way or a cheaper method of doing this or that. The question with us is, whether a book will take, — will sell well; not whether it is worth taking or worth selling. The purchaser asks the price, — looks to the binding, the paper or the plates, — without learning the contents. The Press is daily sending forth its thousands and tens of thousands; for the publisher says 't is profitable.

To judge from appearances rather than facts, to mistake the profitable for the useful, are errors incident to youth; but we are fast hardening into the bone of manhood. Our literature, though now dependant, in some measure, on that of the mother-country, must soon go alone. Its future eminence must depend upon its bringing-up; upon the impressions it now receives, and the principles it imbibes: how important, then, that these impressions and these principles be of a manly and independent character!

We are, as it were, but colonies. True, we have declared our independence, and gained our liberty; but we have dissolved only the political bonds which connected us with Great Britain: though we have rejected her tea, she still supplies us with food for the mind. Milton and Shakespeare, Cowper and Johnson, with their kindred spirits, have done and are still doing for us as much for the advancement of literature and the establishment of a pure and nervous language, on this side, as on the other side of the water. They are as much venerated, and their works are as highly prized by us as by our English brethren: and who

will say that the influence they have exerted has been prejudicial to our literary interests?

Our national pride has been roused by the perusal of sundry journals and books of travel, purporting to contain faithful descriptions of men and manners in America: the remarks of English and Scotch reviewers have, in various instances, induced us to be more careful in the use of language, and to discard much that is superfluous or provincial in our vocabulary. We are not totally indifferent with regard to the notice which the *soi-disant* critics of Europe have condescended to take of our literature: and though we may affect to overlook their cutting remarks, or regard them but as the sallies of envy and calumny; still we feel that they are not entirely without foundation. The more cuffs and hard knocks we sustain, the more robust and manly we grow. Each successive defeat afforded the Carthaginians new lessons in the art of war, till at length Rome herself trembled at their progress.

Our respect for what is foreign, on the other hand, has a tendency to render us blind to native merit, and lead us into a servile adoration of imported genius. We afford but little encouragement to that which is of domestic manufacture, but prefer to send out our raw material, that it may pass through a foreign mill. The aspirant for fame must breathe the atmosphere of foreign parts, and learn to talk about things which the homebred student never dreamed of, if he would have his talents appreciated, or his opinion regarded by his countrymen. Then will they dwell on every

word he utters, watch the cut of his coat, the cock of his hat, — ape his pronunciation and manners, and perhaps honor him with a public dinner.

Ours are authors *of the day;* they bid fair to outlive their works: they are too fashionable to write for posterity: what the public seizes on with avidity to-day, ceases to interest it to-morrow, when the charm of novelty has worn off. Particular styles and subjects have each in their turn engaged the attention of the literati.

How much ink has been shed, how much paper wasted, in imitations of Ossian, while the productions of Macpherson lie neglected on our shelves! The devotee of literary fashion is no stranger to our shores. True, there are some amongst us who can contemplate the babbling brook without (in imagination) polluting its waters with a mill-wheel; but even they are prone to sing of skylarks and nightingales, perched on hedges, to the neglect of the homely robin-redbreast, and the straggling rail-fence of their own native land.

Some triteness of phrase apart, it would be hard for an American eighty years later to give a sounder verdict than this one, which was rendered by a youth not yet nineteen, in the days when Irving, Cooper, Bryant, and the travelled exquisites Longfellow and Willis were our popular authors; with Bancroft and the Everetts, and a few clergymen in the background, and Hawthorne and Poe

not yet attracting notice. With Emerson's "Nature," issued in a small edition later in the year 1836, the "North American Review" dealing with criticism, and Clay and Webster for orators, the United States faced a frowning world, and endured the assaults of Colonel Hamilton, Wordsworth's English neighbor, and Mrs. Trollope, the mother of two good novelists. Lowell and Holmes were yet scarcely known as poets; and Jefferson and the Adamses with Madison and Alexander Hamilton ranked high among political writers. The Concord school of authors, along with those extremes of the literary class, Dr. Channing and the wayward Poe, were soon to declare boldly our literary independence of England, making us allies and no longer colonists.

It is now time to present some of those youthful essays of Thoreau, in which his expanding experience and his wider reading began to exhibit those more virile intellectual traits which have long been recognized in everything he published, and in the wealth of his writings given to the world in the half-century since he ceased to write. The present essays were never designed for publication, except on that limited scale which college exercises then allowed; when college magazines hardly existed, and prize essays seldom

appeared in print. These manuscripts were preserved by the author, probably because he saw in them some fitness for survival — some germs or aspects of thought, to which he might need to recur in later years. Out of less than fifty such papers, which had accumulated during his last three years at Cambridge, he kept by him and left to his family about thirty; including his Commencement Essay, which in its chirography exhibited the greatest care and fastidious neatness among some thousands of manuscript pages that have passed under my eye, first and last, from his pen. He wrote every word with those untiring fingers; he never had an amanuensis until in the last few weeks of his illness; and would often write the same passage three and four times over. Each one of these early essays — all written before he was twenty, and the earliest ones in the unformed handwriting of a boy — has some merit, were it only a certain quaintness peculiar to himself; while most of them show a concise expression singular in one so young, and so ready with tongue or pen. Here is a metaphysical chapter which differs from anything yet presented. Its date is May 5, 1837, two months before his college residence ended.

XVI. The Superior and the Common Man

"Paley, in his 'Natural Theology,' Chap. 23, speaks of minds utterly averse to 'the flatness of being content with common reasons,' and considers the highest minds 'most liable to this repugnancy.'

"See the passage, and explain the moral or intellectual defect."

Turgot has said, — "He that has never doubted the existence of Matter, may be assured he has no aptitude for metaphysical inquiries." It would seem as if doubt and uncertainty grew with the growth of the intellect, and strengthened with its strength. The giant intellect, it is true, is for a season borne along with the tide; the opinion and prejudice of the mass are silently acquiesced in; the senses are for a while the supreme arbiters, from whose decision there is no appeal. Mystery is yet afar off; it is but a cloud in the distance, whose shadow, as it flits across the landscape, gives a pleasing variety to the scene. But as the perfect day approaches, its morning light discovers the dark and straggling clouds, which at first skirted the horizon, assembling as at a signal, and as they expand and multiply rolling slowly onward to the zenith; till at last the whole heavens, if we except a faint glimmering in the east, are overshadowed.

The earth was once firm beneath the feet; but now it affords only a frail support, — its solid surface is as yielding and elastic as air. The grass grew and the water ran, — and who so blind as to question their

reality? A feeling of loneliness comes over the soul, — for these things are now of the Past.

This is the season of probation; but the time approaches, and is now at hand, when the glorious bow shall rise on the lurid rear of the tempest, — the sun laugh jocundly abroad, and

> "Every bathèd leaf and blossom fair
> Pour out its soul to the delicious air."

The embryo philosopher seeks the sunny side of the hill, or the grateful coolness of the grove, — he instinctively bares his bosom to the zephyr, that he may, with the less inconvenience, discuss the reality of outward existences. No proposition is so self-evident as to escape his suspicion, nor yet so obscure as to withstand his scrutiny. He acknowledges but two distinct existences, Nature and Spirit; all things else which his obstinate and self-willed senses present to him, are plainly, though unaccountably absurd. He laughs through his tears at the very mention of a mathematical demonstration. There is a flatness about what is common that at once excites his ridicule or disgust. He goes abroad into the world, and hears men assert and deny in positive terms, — and he is astounded, he is shocked, — he perceives no meaning in their words or their actions. He recognizes no axioms, he smiles at reason and common sense; and sees truth only in the dreams and superstitions of mankind.

And yet, — he but carries out principles which men practically admit every day of their lives. Most, nay, all acknowledge a few mysteries; some things, they admit, are hard to understand, but these are compara-

tively few; and could they but refer them back one link in the chain of causes and effects the difficulty would at once be removed. Our philosopher has a reasonable respect for the opinions of men, but this respect has not power to blind his judgment; taking, as he does, an original view of things, he innocently confounds the manifest with the mysterious. That such was the common reason was, properly enough, in the first place no recommendation with him, and is now a positive objection.

What is more common than error? Some seeming truths he has clung to, as the strongholds of certainty, till a closer investigation induced mistrust. His confidence in the infallibility of Reason is shaken; his very existence becomes problematical. He has been sadly deceived, and experience has taught him to doubt, to question even the most palpable truths. He feels that he is not secure till he has gone back to their most primitive elements, and taken a fresh and unprejudiced view of things. He builds for himself, in fact, a new world.

For the opinions of the few, the persecuted, the dreamers of the world, he has a peculiar respect; he is prepossessed in their favor. Man does not wantonly rend the meanest tie that binds him to his fellows; he would not stand aloof even in his prejudices, did not the stern demands of Truth, backed by conviction, require it. He is ready enough to float with the tide; and when he does stem the current of popular opinion, sincerity at least must nerve his arm.

He has not only the burden of proof, but that of

reproof to support. We may call him a fanatic, an enthusiast, — but these are titles of honor; they signify the devotion and entire surrender of himself to his cause. Where there is sincerity is truth also. So far as my experience goes, man *never* seriously maintained an objectionable principle, doctrine or theory. Error *never* had a sincere defender; her disciples were *never* enthusiasts. This is strong language, I confess; but I do not rashly make use of it. We are told that "to err is human," but I would rather call it *in*human, — if I may use the word in that sense. I speak not of those errors that have to do with facts and occurrences, but rather, errors of judgment. Words, too, I would regard as mere signs of ideas. That passage in the "Vicar of Wakefield" which Johnson pronounced fine, but which Goldsmith was wise enough to strike out, previous to publication, must be taken in a very limited sense. "When I was a young man," he wrote, "I was perpetually starting new propositions; but I soon gave that over, *for I found that, generally, what was new was false.*"

At best, we can but say of a common reason, that men do not dispute it. True, they defend it when attacked, for if they did not, Reason never would. This is well explained by Gray, when he undertook to account for the popularity of Shaftesbury; "Men are very prone," he says, "to believe what they do not understand; they will believe anything at all, provided they are under no obligation to believe it; they love to take a new road, even when that road leads nowhere."

The mingling here of poetic thought with paradoxical argument must have struck the ordinary college professor with surprise and horror, perhaps a little softened with amusement. It is a good introduction to those deeper paradoxes with which Thoreau afterwards startled and stumbled his early readers. I ascribe this aroused and confused condition of his mind to the atmosphere of Transcendentalism then beginning to encircle a small part of New England; and to the strong impression made on the young idealist by a few persons, about this time; by Orestes Brownson, for example, with whom he had lived for some months the preceding winter in the suburban town of Canton, where Thoreau taught a village school during the long vacation, specially arranged for college students to earn a little money, by teaching here or there. Garrison, also, whose anti-slavery doctrines Thoreau's family had accepted already, and Emerson most of all were influences.

Emerson's first book, "Nature," his young townsman had read soon after it came out in 1836. The ferment in the mind of thoughtful youth, something like that so passionately portrayed in Carlyle's "Sartor Resartus," must be taken into account, in explaining the mental state

of the contemporaries of such active agents in putting old routine to flight, in the years from 1833 to 1840. The fondness of Thoreau for a joke, a quiz, may also be considered in construing these astonishing phrases.

The next essay, written six weeks before that which I have cited and commented, may be called —

XVII. The Sublimity of Death

"The thunder's roll, the lightning's flash, the billow's roar, the earthquake shock, all derive their dread sublimity from Death. Examine this theory."

"Whatever," says Burke, "is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain and danger, — that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, — is a source of the Sublime. Indeed, terror is, in all cases whatsoever, either more openly or latently, the ruling principle of the Sublime."

Hence Obscurity, Solitude, Power, and the like, so far as they are fitted to excite terror, are sources of the Sublime. This is a theory far more satisfactory than that which we are about to examine. Burke does not make death the source of terror, but rather pain, — using the word in its broadest sense.

Death itself is sublime. It has all the attributes of sublimity, — Mystery, Power, Silence, — a sublimity which no one can resist; which may be heightened, but

cannot be equalled by the thunder's roll or the cannon's peal. But yet, though incomparably more awful, this is the same sublimity that is ascribed to the tumult of the troubled ocean, — the same in kind, though different in degree, — depending for its effect upon the same principles of our nature, though affecting us more powerfully and universally. To attribute the two to different principles is not only unphilosophical, but manifestly unnecessary.

We shrink with horror from attributing emotions so exalted and unearthly and, withal, so flattering to our nature, to an abject fear of death. We would fain believe that the immortals, who know no fear, nor ever taste of death, can sympathize with us poor worldlings in our reverence for the Sublime; that they listen to the thunder's roar, and behold the lightning's flash, with emotions similar to our own. We do believe it; we have so represented it. The sublimity of the conflict on the plains of Heaven, between the rebel angels and the Almighty's loyal bands, as described by Milton, was not lost upon the spirits engaged in it. Raphael, who recounts the particulars of the fight to our forefather Adam, describes the Messiah as riding *sublime* "on the wings of cherub" —

> "On the crystalline sky, in sapphire throned,
> Illustrious far and wide."

Nor could he have been entirely unconscious of the emotion in question, when he compared the combat between Satan and Michael to the meeting of two planets; as if, to use his own expression, —

"Among the constellations war were sprung,
Two planets, rushing from aspect malign
Of fiercest opposition, in mid sky
Should combat, and their jarring spheres confound."

Who can contemplate the hour of his birth, or reflect on the obscurity and darkness from which he then emerged into a still more mysterious existence, without being powerfully impressed with the idea of sublimity? Shall we derive this sublimity from death?

Nay, further, — can anything be conceived more sublime than that second birth, the Resurrection? It is a subject which we approach with a kind of reverential awe. It has inspired the sublimest efforts of the poet and the painter. The trump which shall awake the dead is the creation of poetry; but (to follow out the idea) will its sound excite in us no emotion? or will the Blessed, whom it shall summon to forsake the mouldering relics of mortality, and wing their way to brighter and happier worlds, listen with terror or indifference? Shall he who is acknowledged while on earth to have a *soul* for the sublime and beautiful in nature, hereafter, when he shall be *all* soul, lose this divine privilege? Shall we be indebted to the body for emotions which would adorn Heaven? And yet there are some who will refer you to the casting off of this "mortal coil" as the beginning and, I may add, the consummation of all this.

We can hardly say that fear is a source of the sublime. It may be indispensable, it is true, that a certain degree of awe should enter into the admiration with which we listen to the billow's roar or the howling of

the storm. We do not tremble with fright; but the calm which comes over the soul is like that which precedes the earthquake. It is a pleasure of the highest kind to behold a mighty river, rolling impetuously, and as it were blindly onward, to the edge of the precipice, where for successive ages it plunges headlong to the bottom, — roaring and foaming in its mad career, and shaking the solid earth by its fall: but it is not joy that we experience: it is pleasure mingled with reverence, and tempered with humility.

Burke has said that "terror is in all cases whatsoever, either more openly or latently, the ruling principle of the sublime." Alison says as much, but Stewart advances a very different theory. The first would trace the emotion in question to the influence of pain, and of terror, which is but an apprehension of pain. I would make that ruling principle an inherent respect or reverence, which certain objects are fitted to command; which reverence, as it is altogether distinct from, so shall it outlive that terror to which he refers, and operate to exalt and distinguish us, when fear shall be no more.

Whatever is grand, wonderful or mysterious *may* be a source of the sublime. Terror inevitably injures, and if excessive may entirely destroy its effect. To the coward the cannon's peal, the din and confusion of the fight, are not sublime, but rather terrible; the calm and self-collected alone are conscious of their sublimity. Hence, indeed, are they supplied with courage to sustain the conflict. To fear is mortal; angels may reverence. The child manifests respect ere it has ex-

perienced terror. The Deity would be reverenced, not feared.

Hence it is that the emotion in question is so often attended by a consciousness of our own littleness; we are accustomed to admire what seemeth difficult or beyond our attainment. But to feel conscious of our own weakness is not positively unpleasant, unless we compare ourselves with what is incapable of commanding our respect or reverence; and consequently is not a source of the sublime. Grandeur, of some kind or other, must ever enter into our idea of the sublime. Niagara would still retain her sublimity, though her fall should be reduced many feet; but the puny mountain-stream must make up in depth of fall for what it lacks in volume.

What is more grand than mystery? The darker it is, the grander it grows. We habitually call it great. Burke has well remarked that divisibility of matter is sublime; its very infinity makes it so. Infinity is the essence of sublimity.

Whatever demands our admiration or respect is in a degree sublime. It is true nothing could originally demand our respect which was not at the same time *capable* in a greater or less degree, of exciting our fear; but this does not prove fear to be the source of that respect. Nothing, on the other hand, of which we stand in awe, is an object of our contempt; yet the source of our contempt is not, surely, indifference, or a feeling of security. It will be enough merely to advert to the immense influence which the association of ideas exerts.

Burke's theory would extend the emotions which the Sublime excites, to the brute creation. They suffer pain, they experience terror, they possess the faculty of memory; and philosophers have ascribed to them imagination and judgment. Why may not, then, the brute hearken with rapture to the thunder's peal, or, in the depth of the forest enjoy the grandeur of the storm? But the brute knows not that peculiar reverence for what is grand, whether in nature or in art, or in thought or in action, which is the exclusive birthright of the lord of creation. There is an infinity in the mystery, the power and grandeur, which concur in the Sublime, — the abstract nature of which is barely recognized, though not comprehended, by the human mind itself. Philosophers, it is true, have ascribed to brutes "devotion, or respect for superiors"; but, so to speak, this is a respect grounded on experience. It is practical or habitual, not the fruit of abstract reflection, nor does it amount to the recognition of any moral superiority.

But to some it may appear that this reverence for the Grand, if I may so style it, is not an original principle of our nature, — that it originates in fear.

I answer, If this is not, neither is Fear. Nay, more, — the former is a principle more universal in its operation, more exalting and ennobling in its influence: and is, besides, so superior and at variance with fear, that we cannot for a moment derive it from the latter.

The philosopher sees cause for wonder and astonishment in everything, — in himself and in all around him; he has only to reflect that he may admire. Terror

avoids reflection, though reflection alone can restore to calmness and equanimity. How regard, respect, reverence can grow out of fear is, I must confess, incomprehensible. We reverence greatness, moral and intellectual; the giant intellect is no sooner recognized than it demands our homage. Moral greatness calls for the admiration of the depraved, even.

The emotion excited by the Sublime is the most unearthly and godlike we mortals experience. It depends for the peculiar strength with which it takes hold on and occupies the mind, upon a principle which lies at the foundation of that worship which we pay to the Creator himself. And is fear the foundation of that worship? is fear the ruling principle of our religion? Is it not, rather, the mother of superstition?

Yes, — that principle which prompts us to pay an involuntary homage to the Infinite, the Incomprehensible, the Sublime, forms the very basis of our religion. It is a principle implanted in us by our Maker, — a part of our very selves. We cannot eradicate it, we cannot resist it; fear may be overcome, death may be despised; but the Infinite, the Sublime, seize upon the soul and disarm it. We may overlook them, or, rather, fall short of them; we may pass them by, — but so sure as we meet them face to face, we yield.

This is properly a forensic. In it young Thoreau argues, at first rather technically, but finally with earnestness and conviction, for what was through life the foundation of his philosophy and his religion. He used here the language of the old

believers, and the fictions of Milton, more familiarly than he would have done twenty years later, because he was arguing in the midst of old believers; but the fundamental ideas were those which he steadfastly maintained, with or against friend or foe. Channing said of him in 1873: —

> The high moral impulse never deserted him, and he resolved early (1851) to read no book, take no walk, undertake no enterprise, but such as he could endure to give an account of to himself.

In this essay, the longest of this moral and religious sort which I find in these collegiate papers, we see how early these serious questions addressed themselves to his conscience, and how soon he settled the bases of his religion. This turn of spirit drew from several of his family some question and remonstrance, — from Helen, his sister, perhaps first; but it was encouraged by Emerson, with whom about this time (March, 1837) his closer intimacy began. It was from early intimacy with his young friend's spirit, as well as from their long friendship in after years, that Emerson said in his funeral eulogy, which he insisted should be given in the parish church: —

> He was a person of a rare, tender, and absolute religion; a person incapable of any profanation, by act or by thought.

Thoreau would not perhaps have used in later years those forms of Miltonic expression that came so naturally to his pen in these college years; but surely there was in him that innate reverence which was so marked a quality of his Greek tutor at Harvard, Jones Very, the recluse poet, whose religious verse has found a German translator and been published in Vienna, of all places in the world. Conformity, to be sure, was much more in Very's nature than in Thoreau's. How Henry expressed himself about that decorous virtue, may be seen in this short essay of May 15, 1837: —

XVIII. Conformity in Things Unessential

"The clock sends me to bed at ten, and makes me rise at eight. I go to bed awake, and arise asleep; but I have ever held conformity one of the arts of life; and though I might choose my own hours, I think it proper to follow theirs." (Mrs. E. Montagu's *Letters*.)

"Speak of the duty, inconvenience, and dangers of *Conformity*, in little things and great."

Neither natural nor revealed religion affords any rules by which we may determine the comparative enormity of different vices, or the comparative excellence of different virtues.

The Hebrew Code, which Christ came not to destroy but to fulfil, makes no such distinction; vice, under

whatever form, is condemned in positive and unqualified terms. We are told, in our Savior's exposition of the Law, that one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law until all be fulfilled; and "Whosoever shall break one of the least Commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven."

So far, too, as man has deduced a moral code from a philosophical study of Nature, her design and operations, — our remark will hold good of that also. The idea appears to be a prevalent one that Duty consists in certain outward acts, whose performance is more or less obligatory under different circumstances, though it can never be entirely neglected with impunity; and consequently that one duty may interfere with another; and that there may be situations in which a man cannot possibly avoid the violation of duty. This arises, I think, from confining duty to the outward act, instead of making it consist in conformity to the dictates of an inward arbiter, *in a measure independent of Matter, and its relations, Time and Space.* Duty is one and invariable; it requires no impossibilities, nor can it ever be disregarded with impunity. So far as it exists, it is binding, and if all duties are binding, so as on no account to be neglected, how can one bind stronger than another?

So far, then, as duty is concerned, we may entirely neglect the distinction of little things and great. Mere conformity to another's habits or customs is never, properly speaking, a duty, though it may follow as a natural consequence of the performance of Duty.

The fact that such is the general practice of mankind does not affect a question of duty. I am required, it is true, to respect the feelings of my neighbor, within the limits of his own estate; but the fear of displeasing the world ought not in the least to influence my actions. Were it otherwise, the principal avenue to Reform would be closed.

The italicized clause above is cancelled in the copy before me, — the only one existing in Thoreau's manuscript, — which is a more careless draft than usual, containing several emendations in the text. These appear to have been made after it was returned by the professor to the student; and all the changes appear to be Thoreau's own. It seems by this text that "Reform" had become an important object in the view of this young Senior Sophister; as it was in the fervent thought of his friend Brownson, then a "Locofoco Democrat" and not yet a Catholic priest; in that of Garrison, the friend of his family; and in the musings of Bronson Alcott, who had now begun to visit Emerson in his retirement at Concord, and must soon have met this collegian there. The first visit of Alcott to Concord was in 1835, on the very day that Garrison was mobbed at Scollay Square in Boston, and committed to the county jail by Mayor Lyman, to

save his life from the mob. Returning in his chaise from Concord that September evening, Alcott went to call on his persecuted friend in the Leverett Street jail — to renew the pledge he had given Garrison in 1831, when he began to publish the "Liberator," which weekly visited the Thoreau household, wherever it might dwell in the village.

Not long after the date of this brief essay, Emerson wrote to President Quincy, of Harvard, asking some favor from the dispensers of college benefactions toward his young friend, who already had enjoyed the income of an old Chelsea estate, whose rent had come successively to the brothers William and Waldo Emerson while they were in Harvard, fifteen or twenty years before. It had been for a century or more in the gift of the Second Church in Boston, of which Emerson's father had been the pastor; and the beneficiary was expected to collect his own rents, unless a deacon of the church volunteered to do that. Thoreau explained to me one day at his mother's table through what obstacles of dogs and delays he had gathered in his rents at Romney Marsh, the old name of that seashore district. Emerson's request to Quincy was for something other than this, and resulted in an

"exhibition" (the technical term) of $25, which, said the old President, was "within $10, or at most $15, of any sum he would have received, had no objection been made." This objection showed that Thoreau had been less attentive to college requirements than the immediate watchmen of his college life thought needful. When I asked Marston Watson, of Plymouth, who was Sophomore while Thoreau was Senior, what he knew of the Concord youth in college, he replied that he remembered him at the Chapel in a green coat, "green, I suppose, because the rules required black," — implying that even then he was, like my clerical ancestor in England under Laud, a "notorious inconformist."

Earlier in the year (February, 1837) and while Caleb Cushing and the Whig Party in Massachusetts were still passing anti-slavery resolutions at the State House, with the approval of Daniel Webster, Thoreau discussed in an essay the issue of sectional *versus* national politics, which had roused debate at Washington, and called forth the stubborn independence of John Quincy Adams, then a Congressman from the Quincy district. Here it is: —

XIX. Provincial Americans

"Speak of the Characteristics which, either humorously or reproachfully, we are in the Habit of ascribing to the People of different Sections of our own Country."

Nationality is not necessarily nor strictly speaking an aggregate of individualities, — any further than words are concerned. A people, to be sure, may be peculiarly industrious, — distinguished from their neighbors in that respect, in the same manner that an individual is; but usually, when we reckon industry among the characteristics of a people, we refer not to any peculiarity in that industry, but to its prevalence. When, on the other hand, we say of an individual that he is a shrewd man, no peculiarity is implied; so that unless we coin an epithet for the occasion, we are fain to call him a *peculiarly* shrewd man. This may teach us how far the knowledge of a nation's characteristics should influence our judgment of individuals. In the first place we are to consider that the individual before us may be one of the few who, constituting but a small item in the national character, were not taken into the account; and in the second place, that, of the majority, not a single individuality can be embraced or implied. Add to this the fact that such characteristics may generally be traced to the Journal of some traveller, who has taken a hasty and partial survey of but one section of a country, and are often the mere echo of previous prejudices, — and we shall be able to judge how slight the probability is that the so-called

characteristics of a people have any foundation in truth.

It is not a little curious to observe how Man, the boasted Lord of Creation, is the slave of a name, — a mere sound. Cassius was not the first to note this. The distinction of classes in a college affords an instance of it. If a multitude be collected from all quarters, and of every condition, and a common name be given them, a powerful sympathy will immediately spring up; which in time will generate a community of interests. In this light, man is properly enough called a gregarious animal; but it appears to me the common epithet is as often the connecting link, as it is the result of such a unit.

Rome had never been the mistress of the world, had not the distinction of allies been merged in the title of "Roman Citizen." They were Romans who conquered the world: so many Latins, Apulians, and Campanians, had they stood in other respects in precisely the same relative situations, would sooner have gone to war with each other.

How much mischief have those magical words, North, South, East, and West occasioned! Could we not rest satisfied with one mighty, all-embracing West, leaving the other three cardinal points to the Old World? — methinks we should not have cause for so much apprehension about the preservation of the Union. When in addition to these natural distinctions, descriptive and characteristic epithets are applied, by their own countrymen, to the people of different sections, though in a careless and bantering manner, the patriot may well tremble for the Union.

A sound, impartial judgment is less to be esteemed for the evident good consequences it leads to, than prejudice is to be feared for the incalculable evil it engenders. It is easier to convince a man's reason than to regulate his feelings. There are certain principles implanted in us which, independently of the will, teach us the consistency and inconsistency of things, when viewed in certain relations. By operating upon these principles, through the medium of certain definite propositions, corresponding invariable results in the mind of each one, of necessity follow. That these conclusions as invariably affect the conduct, I do not pretend. The feelings, on the other hand, are not at the mercy of any such definite law which regulates and disposes them. The eloquence which at one time touches with a master's hand the chords of human sympathy, and raises almost to a pitch of phrenzy the rapt and excited multitude, at another, perhaps, falls powerless and ineffectual; or excites those very feelings it was its object to soothe and allay.

There is the same difficulty in dissipating those prejudices already formed. The sober truth may be recognized, the false judgment admitted, — but a crowd of associations has so confounded error with the most palpable truths, that the evil can be but partially, if ever, eradicated. What once floated harmlessly upon the surface, in time commingles with and becomes a part of the mighty element, which at first barely afforded it a resting-place.

This disquisition, profound to the verge of

obscurity, without once touching practicality, must have fatigued the professor, as it still does the casual reader. Its deep truth is apparent, notwithstanding, — and also the whimsical perversity or paradoxicality which inspired its composition. About this time (February, 1837) Thoreau's manifest turn for paradox was showing itself more and more in company with that felicity of phrase and occasional originality that contrasted sharply with a few habits of rhetoric, caught from his companions, or from some aged professor. It is said that the Hollis Professor of Divinity, the elder Henry Ware, had special tricks of speech (such as "on the one hand," "on the other hand") which the graceless students caught at and satirized. Thus the artist Christopher Cranch, who graduated in 1835, along with Thoreau's correspondent and editor Harrison Blake, used to feign Dr. Ware arrived in the Kingdom of Heaven, looking about him over his spectacles, and exclaiming, "While on the one hand we must admit that no merit of our own has availed to bring us to this desirable place, — on the other hand, we are bound to praise the goodness of our Lord, who hath, in spite of our unworthiness thus filled all our desires." Thoreau may have fallen unconsciously into this measured

way of speaking and writing. No such formality restrains him in the next fragmentary essay: —

XX. Various Means of Public Influence

"Compare some of the Methods of gaining or exercising Public Influence: as Lectures, the Pulpit, Associations, the Press, Political Office."

Inveterate custom, as well as the respect with which most men regard his sacred office, secure to the Preacher a certain, though limited influence. He is the shepherd of a flock, — the infallible guide and arbiter in spiritual affairs. His parish is his kingdom, where he rules with an almost despotic sway; the young, even from the cradle, are taught to value his approving smile, and tremble at his frown: the aged despise not his teachings, nor are the vicious backward to respect those virtues which yet they fail to imitate. At church he can depend upon an orderly, if not an attentive audience; the great truths and principles which are there expounded, equally concern the highest interests of all. Criticism has no place there; the peculiarities and failings of the preacher are overlooked, or, if noticed, are willingly pardoned by his indulgent hearers. The character of the day, as well as the sanctity of the place, are the source of a thousand associations, which impart a degree of solemnity and weight to his words, — scarcely to be attained by the most labored style, aided by all the arts of eloquence.

"Truth from his lips *prevails* with double sway,
And fools who came to scoff remain to pray."

Yet the sphere of the Preacher's influence is comparatively narrow and circumscribed. His own little flock alone acknowledge his sway: the village spire overlooks his puny territories, while the sound of the "church-going bell" is heard in their remotest corner. To respect his person and venerate his teachings, from a duty degenerates into a habit, which, from the very nature of its origin, too often opposes an insuperable barrier to a further increase of his authority.

He, on the other hand, who addresses his fellowmen through the medium of the Press, is so far a stranger to the mass of his readers as not to be exposed to the mass of those prejudices with which a personal acquaintance would be inevitably attended. His field of labor is the universe. The thousands of newspapers that circulate throughout the United States develope different sorts of editors. One sort gives his readers conclusions at which he had previously arrived, without troubling them with a formidable list of propositions and connecting links; here are the facts, — let them "pepper and dish as they choose." Another editor is by far more sophistical; in his articles not a single term, premise or mode but is subjected to the severest scrutiny. He goes on very well till he comes to the inference: but then, alas! after all this display, he is wont to draw his inference by main force from some other quarter. One editor is disposed to show all he knows, if not to know all he shows. Another is so overwhelmed with particulars that he is unable to wield them all. His inference may be so unwieldy that he is unable to start it. Another takes but a partial view of things, and is very

much in the situation of one who looks through a microscope, and thus obtains a correct idea of the minute parts of an object; but is apt to lose sight of its outward bulk and more obvious qualities.

In authorship, as we see it in America to-day, there are at least two distinct varieties, the Travelling Author and the Native Author. The first lands on our shores with all the prejudices of the old countries fresh in his mind; and prepares to criticise our manners, our customs, and our country, by comparison with those paragons which he has left at home. Fully impressed, as every honest citizen should be, with the superiority of his own country, and the preëminent perfection of her government and institutions, he judges of what is right and wrong, good and bad (for these are but relative terms), by comparison with those fixed and faultless standards, to distrust which is to him worse than sacrilege. Be he ever so free from prejudice, ever so liberal a cosmopolite (in the broadest sense), the professed journalist and travelling bachelor is too tender of the bantling on his hands, — his respectable duodecimo that is to be, — too solicitous for the popularity of his book, — to withhold the "sugared cates" so temptingly offered at every turn; or, when he has done, to offer the needed cathartic. In despair of acquiring a vigorous and healthy fame, he is fain to content himself with a shortlived and bloated reputation, though at the expense of truth.

Not so with the Native Author. He feels that he is writing the biography of a family of which he is himself a member. It is the broad and flourishing homestead

that he describes; the faults and blemishes in the picture he has never attended to, — or else the whim-whams and oddities of his brothers and sisters have become so familiar to him as no longer to seem such. He remarks in them those peculiarities alone from which he is free, and which, to the eye of a stranger, have nothing in common with habits of mind which are said to "run in the family." The one, in fine, knows too much, and the other too little, of the country he would describe, and the manners he pretends to portray.

Here the fragment ends. In his Preacher, Thoreau was drawing a sketch of Dr. Ripley, who baptized and catechized him, and to whose sermons he listened for years. In the second chapter of the "Week" this pastor of half a century is briefly remembered in verse: —

> "Here then an aged Shepherd dwelt,
> Who to his flock his substance dealt,
> And ruled them with a vigorous crook,
> By precept of the sacred Book;
> But he the pierless bridge passed o'er,
> And solitary left the shore."

He was living when John and Henry Thoreau passed and repassed along the river at the foot of the orchard of the old parson; but in 1849, when the volume was printed, he had been dead eight years, and Hawthorne, who had succeeded

him in the Old Manse, had also "left the shore," and was living at Lenox. The Manse reverted to the Ripley family who owned it, and the learned Mrs. Ripley, a widow, was housekeeper there until her death in 1867.

It may be added, in correction of an error which Emerson never corrected in successive editions of his "Poems," that it was not on April 19, 1836, but on July 4, 1837, the year of Thoreau's graduation, that the celebrated "Hymn" was sung "at the completion of the Battle Monument." Delay in the stone work had carried the date beyond that originally fixed, and even a year afterward, and so the next patriotic holiday was chosen. The inscription, in the mean time, had also been written by Emerson; but his elders in the village thought they could better his English, and threw it into its present form. A choir from the churches sang the immortal poem to the tune of "Old Hundred," and Thoreau, who was then habitually a singer, as well as a flute-player, joined in the choir.

Thoreau's powers of analysis and classification, and his methodical reasoning on most subjects, indicate that his paradoxes were rather a sport of his humor, or a freak of fancy, inherited from one of that very dissimilar group of ances-

tors and ancestresses of whom he descended. But, like all young persons, he had much to learn, even along the line of his inherited bent of mind; and the next essay, which I have deferred till now, will show how much he had profited by Harvard training, self-culture, and Emersonian influences, in the intervening two years. This essay is one of the earliest in date. Though dated late in 1835, I have reasons for thinking it belongs in the Sophomore year, 1834–35, and dates from the late autumn of 1834: —

XXI. Mankind Classified

"Explain the phrases, a Man of Business, a Man of Pleasure, a Man of the World."

To say of one that he is a Man of Business, according to the general acceptation of the phrase, seems not merely to imply that he is engaged in business, but also that he is an energetic, persevering man; one who is ever on the lookout, ever awake to his interest, — well calculated to get along in the world. A man may be an excellent calculator, he may form the best of plans, but fail in the execution of them. And, on the other hand, many who have no fixed plans, who are incapable of looking far into futurity, and of forming and abiding by any fixed rules of conduct, may in the end succeed better than the former.

Nothing can be of more advantage in business than a

habit of despatch; and what contributes more to that than method? In fine, let one possess method and perseverance, industry and activity, — united with prudence and foresight, and a competent knowledge of human nature, — and you may justly call him a Man of Business.

A large portion of mankind are wrapped up in the pursuit of what they imagine to be pleasure; which, like their own shadows, is always within a certain distance, but which no effort on their part can bring nearer; so that their only real enjoyment lies in the anticipation of pleasure. The fault seems to lie not so much in the object, as in the means employed. They have a false idea of pleasure; with them, as far as a thing is useful, so far is it devoid of pleasure; hence they "forsake what may instruct for what may please."

> "Whom call we gay? That honor has been long
> The boast of mere pretenders to the name:
> The innocent are gay."

Hence we perceive that the phrase "a Man of Pleasure" is generally applied to those who in fact enjoy the least.

Avoid a Man of the World as you would avoid a viper! for, like the viper in the fable, he will sting the hand that has nourished him. Sheridan has observed with regard to this class, that they have become so polished and refined that their Maker's inscription is worn from them, and when he calls in his coin, he will not know them for his own. This man is your friend so long as it serves his interest; he is well acquainted with men and manners, and by means of his art passes, per-

haps, for a true gentleman, — for an honorable and benevolent man; but in truth his honor and morality are regulated by the fashion of the times. His principal object is to turn everything to his advantage; and for this purpose he endeavors to gain the respect or good will of all around him.

The unworldly tone and the unformed handwriting, which yet is Henry's own unmistakably, confirm the suspicion that it is one of the earliest of these essays preserved. It is numbered 11 — but we do not know when the numbering began. Immediately preceding it in assumed date, and equally unformed in chirography and knowledge of the world, yet quaint and entertaining, is this comment on —

XXII. Social Forms and Restraints

"On what Grounds may the Forms, Ceremonies and Restraints of Polite Society be objected to? Speak of some of them. What Purposes are they intended to answer?"

In a primitive state of society, where man is buried in ignorance, and the arts and refinements of civilized life are neglected — or rather, unknown — but few forms or ceremonies exist: while, on the other hand, as civilization advances, and the pursuits and studies of mankind assume a nobler and more elevated character, — in that proportion does Man, in this intercourse with his fellows, comply with certain rules, which serve in a

measure to preserve a just balance between the different classes of society. I say in a measure only; for most are apt to go to excess in this particular. If one wishes to obtain their good opinion, he must go through a long catalogue of useless forms, and sacrifice truth, sincerity and candor to politeness.

A friend is invited to dine, — each dish is excellent, the very dinner he could have desired, neither too rare nor overdone. Are the contents of his neighbor's glass unluckily transferred to his dress? O, 't is of no consequence! he had already determined to send it to the dye-house; and, moreover, had previously fixed upon the very color which will conceal its present defect. Thus are these petty evils beauties in his eyes (those eyes which for the time, he uses), — and himself, perhaps, in the eyes of his host, what is still more estimable, — a perfect gentleman, truly a pattern of politeness. After much bowing and scraping he is released, — yes, released, — for, during the last hour or two, he has been under a certain restraint, and is now as glad to be liberated as the prisoner whose term has expired.

Here is a touch of everyday life, drawn from observation, and not from Cooper's novels nor Sheridan's comedies. The old wooden county prison, in which Henry's great-uncles, Josiah and Simeon, had been confined in the Revolution, had now been long replaced by a strong granite dungeon, with rings and staples for the chaining down of murderers and maniacs, built in 1797,

in which afterward Thoreau himself, in 1845, was briefly imprisoned; it stood behind the sheriff's house and was usually well filled with short-sentence prisoners, who were employed to reclaim the jailer's peat-bog and alder-swamp. These hard-worked, and occasionally hanged, prisoners were objects of curiosity to the boys and youth of the village; and Henry had often seen them released at the expiration of their term. The polite dinner-party may have also been witnessed by him at Major Hosmer's, the High Sheriff's, or Squire Hoar's, the leader of the bar, or Colonel Whiting's, the commander of the local regiment. We resume the sketch by this young Theophrastus or La Bruyère: —

Perhaps on his way home he meets his friend G. There is no escape, the road is straight, he must therefore summon up courage and press onward. "How do you do? I am heartily glad to see you, — have been penned up at my friend R.'s these three hours; hope you will honor me with a call immediately! (Aside) Fortunately I'm about to leave town."

This is carried too far; it is beneath the dignity of a true gentleman to be tied down by such restraints. To be sure, ceremony may serve as a barrier against impertinence, but it also hides a multitude of sins. Far from estimating a man's character by the degree of attention he bestows upon this point, you may rest

assured that, the more extensive the outworks, the wider and deeper the moat, the more insignificant is the garrison within. Like the Romans who, half famished with hunger, in order to deceive the enemy, cast forth that bread which was so scarce, — so do the ceremonious deceive those around them with regard to their true characters, by an occasional display of that wisdom which they so much need.[1]

To conclude, — as an eminent writer has remarked, — "Ceremony is the superstition of good breeding, as well as of religion; but yet, being an outwork of both, should not be absolutely demolished." It must to a certain degree be complied with, though in itself a very silly thing.

I have introduced these rather boyish essays out of their true date, partly by way of contrast to the serious writing that here precedes them, and also because they illustrate a vein of humor and juvenility in Thoreau that, until his last illness, he never quite outgrew. Ellery Channing, who, of all his companions, best knew the

[1] The phrase "that wisdom which he so much needs" is from the prayer of the eccentric parson William Swett, son of Colonel Swett, of Lexington, for the President of the United States, after General Jackson had removed the deposits from his antagonist Biddle's United States Bank; in the national controversy over that organ of the plutocracy of the period, which secured the allegiance and ruined the careers of Henry Clay and Daniel Webster. "O Lord, bless the President of these United States," prayed the parson at the Cattle-Show dinner; "Grant him that wisdom which he *so much needs*." For Thoreau's description of this Cattle Show, see a later page.

intricacies and contrasts of his nature, has twice in his books touched on this juvenility of the grave moralist and poet-naturalist — in his "Wanderer" and in his Life of Thoreau. The latter, in its first form, he began to publish in the "Boston Commonwealth," while I was its editor, in 1863–64, and before he published it in book form, made serious omissions and additions in 1873. He styled his "Wanderer" a "colloquial poem," and in the canto about Monadnoc, describing that mountain and its Concord visitants, Channing wrote,—

> "Hither not often wandered
> Up from the vale a sportive lad, whose lessons
> Rightly learned and brought from out-door science,
> Required all growths of Nature, new or old.
> So strangely was her general current mixed
> With his vexed native blood, in its crank wit,
> That as a mirror shone this common world
> To this observing youth: whom noting, thence
> I called Idolon, — ever firm to mark
> Swiftly reflected in himself the Whole:
> Whereat Dame Nature smiled, to see her boy
> An individual life, prepared to be
> Her mirror, by his notions, if he may."

The Greek noun *Eidolon* was thus a term for Thoreau, not ill-chosen, though a mystical one.

"The Wanderer" was printed in 1871. In the

first chapter of the Life of Thoreau (1873) he said, — and this is in the original manuscript sketch of 1864: —

He was one of those who keep so much of the boy in them that he could never pass a berry without picking it. I, being gifted with a lesser degree of this edible religion, frequently had to leave him in the rear, picking his berry, while I sat looking at the landscape, or admiring my berry-loving lad. In his later articles he rubbed out as perfectly as he could the more humorous parts, — originally a relief to their sterner features. He said to me, "I cannot bear the levity I find." To which I replied, I hoped he would spare them, — even to the puns, in which he sometimes indulged. As to his laughing, no man did that more or better.

Quite apart from this jesting vein is the next forensic to be cited (April 28, 1837): —

XXIII. The Morality of Lying

"Question the Opinions of J. Dymond and Mrs. Opie, respecting the general Obligation to tell the Truth: are they sound and applicable? (*Vide* Dymond's 'Essays on Morality' and Mrs. Amelia Opie's 'Illustrations of Lying.')"

I shall confine myself to the examination of Mr. Dymond's opinions, without pretending to offer any of my own.

He defines a lie to be "uttering what is not true, when the speaker professes to utter truth, or when he

knows it is expected by the hearer." We are to bear in mind that whether the term is to be used in a good or bad sense, must depend upon the definition assigned it. As here used it is altogether arbitrary. Mr. Dymond does not tell us that this or that is a lie, but finds it necessary to first define the term, — to inform us what, in the following essay, is to be understood by the term *lie*.

This being premised, let us inquire whether a man may, under any circumstances conceivable, tell a lie without the infraction of the moral law. May we not lie to a robber, to preserve our property? Our author thinks not. If we may lie to preserve our property, says he, we may murder; and as it would be wrong to murder in such a case, so would it be wrong to lie. But this reasoning is by no means conclusive; for who can say what constitutes a lie? Dymond applies the term arbitrarily to certain forms of speech; suppose we do the same. To lie, we will say, is "to utter what is *true* when the speaker professes to utter truth, or when he knows it is expected by the hearers."

To lie, then, in this sense would be immoral, because to murder with the same view, would be immoral. It is the similarity of purpose, and not of means, which constitutes the immorality in this case. This method of reasoning amounts in fact to a manifest *petitio principii*.

But further, may we not tell a falsehood to a madman for his own advantage? Dymond's answer amounts to this: It would not be for his advantage, and hence it would be morally wrong to commit so

egregious a blunder. Indeed, this is the only sign of an argument adduced to prove this particular point. This, surely, is founding the guilt of lying upon its ill effects, which procedure our author condemned in the outset.

In the second place, are those untruths (sometimes amounting to lies in the sense in which Dymond uses the term) which custom has sanctioned, in any way defensible? We must here have some regard to the effects of the practice, — the motives and expectations of the parties being unknown. If these are not lies, they are evidently gratuitous; for where is the use of telling an untruth to one who receives it as such? if it is not a fiction calculated to please and instruct. Might not one as well remain silent.

But what is useless is never harmless. If, on the other hand, these are lies, — the speaker "utters what is untrue, when he professes to utter truth, or when he knows it is expected by the hearer," his conduct is certainly to be condemned.

As for those cases in which it is impossible to be deceived, — the compliments which bring up the rear in a dedication or epistle, — we can at best say no good of them. To excuse them because they are taken for what they are worth, would be like pardoning the vices of a dangerous member of society, because his character is properly estimated, — the very fact of its being understood implying its condemnation.

This seems to be a grave jest, aimed at the lack of humor in the excellent Quaker, J. Dymond;

and, by its silence about Amelia Opie, implying a snub to her.

In July, 1835, when he had been two years in college, David Henry Thoreau, at the close of his Sophomore year, took part at a college "exhibition" along with Manlius Clarke, in a Greek dialogue, "Decius and Cato"; Thoreau taking the appropriate part of Cato. In the preceding May, Jones Very, still an undergraduate, but soon to be a Greek tutor, had a Greek version, — both assignments indicating the specialty of the two students in the language of Athens. It is fair to infer that Very influenced Thoreau in his fondness for Greek, and it is true that of all the Concord authors, Thoreau was the best versed in Greek. Mrs. Ripley alone exceeded him in the amount of her Greek reading; but she had more years at her disposal for that study. In the spring of 1836, before leaving college as an invalid, — during which vacation he built and sailed his rude Argo with its Indian name, — Thoreau took up in the following essay the grave question of Fate, as understood by the ancients, — a frequent subject with him.

XXIV. Fate among the Ancients

"What is the Meaning of Fate in the Ancient Use of the Word? What is its popular Significance now?"

No language is so meagre or so imperfect as not to contain a term very nearly if not exactly synonymous with our word "Fate." This proves the universality of the idea. But men in different ages, and under different circumstances, have attributed to various causes the same or similar phenomena. Although the works of Fate have been the same, yet fate itself has undergone an almost infinite variety of modifications. Whereas we read that in old times a certain inexorable trio, called *Moirai*, commencing with the raw material, spun out and finally severed the thread of human life, — in these days of innovation, *one* is compelled to do the work of three.

I have said that the idea is universal. Though many deny that there is any such thing as fate, and others differ in the views they take of it, yet we all have a sufficiently clear idea of what it is, to write about it. (I say *about* it, if not upon it.) Some would at once reject the term; while others would modify its significance, to adapt it to their own opinion.

There appear to have been those, of every age and nation, who have risen above the sensuous conceptions of the multitude; who, satisfied if they could search out the causes of things, by the mental eye alone, have thus, from time to time, rescued small fragments of truth from the general wreck. According to the belief of the mass of the Greeks, three sisters, Clotho,

Lachesis and Atropos, presided over the destinies of men. They were acquainted with the Past, the Present and the Future, and are represented with spindles, which they keep constantly in motion, — spinning the fate of mortals. The Romans had their Parcæ, and the Northerns their Nornen. These sisters were either regarded as independent powers, — the originators as well as executors of certain inevitable, though not immutable laws; or, as some supposed, were the daughters of Jove, and acted in obedience to his commands.

Plato's views appear to have been more correct. "All things," says he, "are in fate, i.e., within its sphere or scheme, — but all things are not fated: it is not in fate that one man shall do so and so, and another suffer so and so; for that would be the destruction of our free agency and liberty: but if any one should choose such a life, and do such and such things, — then it is in fate that such or such consequences shall ensue upon it." That Socrates did not adopt the popular opinion is evident from these words of Cicero: "*Esse Divinum quoddam, quod Socrates dæmonium appellat; cui semper ipse paruerit, — nunquam impellenti, sæpe revocanti.*" (Something Divine existed which Socrates styled his Dæmon and ever he obeyed its voice, — never urging him on, and often calling him back.)

It is difficult to say whether in the popular use of the word at the present day, any peculiar or even precise meaning is attached to the word Fate. Many employ it to signify the necessary, inevitable operation of certain fixed laws, which were originally imposed by the Deity. This definition corresponds to what has been

termed Physical Fate. The ancients never lost sight of an invisible agent or power, independent of the laws of Nature. The point at issue among the moderns is, whether the Deity fore-ordained, or merely fore-knew (before the world was created) what was to happen to his creatures, — whether Man is a free agent. Such was *effatum* (decreed), and therefore unavoidable, said the ancients. Though fated, it was by no means unavoidable, say we. Whatever is *effatum* is fated, said they. Everything or nothing is fated, — yet nothing is *effatum*, say we.

This is as clear a statement as could be expected from a Junior of eighteen in college, on a subject that has divided the beards of the sages for thousands of years. Thoreau returned to it from year to year, and in those meditations of 1839–40 which he sent to Margaret Fuller for her "Dial," in December, 1840, only to be declined with thanks, he said: —

Necessity is my eastern cushion, on which I recline. My eye revels in its prospect, as in the summer haze. I ask no more but to be left alone with it. It is the bosom of Time, and the lap of Eternity. To be necessary is to be needful; and necessity is only another name for inflexibility of good. How I welcome my grim fellow, and walk arm in arm with him! Let me, too, be such a Necessity as he. I love him, he is so flexible, and yields to me as the air to my body. I greet thee, my elder brother, who with thy touch ennoblest

all things. The Romans made Fortune surname to Fortitude; since Fortitude is that alchemy which turns all things to good fortune. *Must* it be so? then it is good.

> Tumble me down, and I will sit
> Upon my ruins, smiling yet.

In October, 1836, he took up a topic less difficult, and wrote on —

XXV. Compulsory Education

"Whether the Government ought to educate the Children of those Parents who refuse to do it Themselves?"

I maintain that the Government ought to provide for the education of all children who would otherwise be brought up — or rather *grow* up — in ignorance. In the first place, the welfare of the individual, and in the second, that of the community, demands it. It is as much the duty of the parent to educate, as to feed and clothe the child. For on what, I would ask, depends that last duty? Why is the child to be fed and clothed, if not to enable him to receive and make a proper use of an education? an education which he is no better able to obtain for himself than he is to supply his physical wants. Indeed, the culture of the physical is important only so far as it is subservient to that of the intellectual man.

No one disputes this. Should, then, poverty or neglect threaten to deprive the child of this right, — a right more dear and more worthy to be cherished and defended than any he can enjoy, — in such a case it

appears to me to be the duty of that neighbor whose circumstances will allow of it, to *take* the part of the child, and act the part of the parent. The duty in this instance amounts to a moral obligation, and is as much a duty as it is to preserve the life of the infant whose unnatural parents would suffer it to starve by the roadside. What can it profit a man that he hath enough to eat and to drink, and the wherewithal he may be clothed, — provided he lose his own soul?

But as these wealthy neighbors can accomplish more good by acting in concert, — can more effectively relieve the unfortunate by a community of good offices, — it is their duty, or in other words the duty of the community, so to do. Thus much for the welfare of the child.

That such a course, in the second place, is consistent with, nay, necessary to, the greatest good of the community, scarcely admits of a doubt. I shall not undertake to prove that the community ought to do what is for its own good; this is entirely unnecessary, since the welfare of posterity is certainly to be consulted.

With the progress of opinion in the fourscore years since this argument was framed, all theoretic objection to it has been withdrawn in lands truly civilized; but the duty is practically evaded in many lands with regard to the races held to be inferior or secondary, like the Negroes at the South, and the Indians in Mexico. If any fault were found with the reasoning, all would allow

the literary form to be good; all is forcibly and concisely set forth. Not less is this true of the more radical thesis which follows.

XXVI. Barbarism and Civilization

"The Mark or Standard by which a Nation is judged to be Barbarous or Civilized. Barbarities of Civilized States."

The justice of a nation's claim to be regarded as civilized seems to depend mainly upon the degree in which Art has triumphed over Nature. Civilization is the influence of Art, and not Nature, on Man. He mingles his own will with the unchanged essences around him, and becomes in his turn the creature of his own creations.

The end of life is education. An education is good or bad according to the disposition or frame of mind it induces. If it tend to cherish and develope the religious sentiment, — continuously to remind man of his mysterious relation to God and Nature, — and to exalt him above the toil and drudgery of this matter-of-fact world, it is good.

Civilization we think not only does not accomplish this, but is directly adverse to it. The civilized man is the slave of Matter. Art paves the earth, lest he may soil the soles of his feet; it builds walls that he may not see the Heavens; year in, year out, the sun rises in vain to him; the rain falls and the wind blows, but they do not reach him. From his wigwam of brick and mortar he praises his Maker for the genial warmth of a sun he

never saw, or the fruitfulness of an earth he disdains to tread upon. Who says that this is not mockery? So much for the influence of Art.

Our rude forefathers took liberal and enlarged views of things, — rarely narrow or partial. They surrendered up themselves wholly to Nature; to contemplate her was a part of their daily food. Was she stupendous? so were their conceptions. The inhabitant of a mountain can hardly be brought to use a microscope; he is accustomed to embrace empires in a single glance. Nature is continually exerting a moral influence over man; she accommodates herself to the soul of man. Hence his conceptions are as gigantic as her mountains. We may see an instance of this if we will but turn our eyes to the strongholds of Liberty, — Scotland, Switzerland and Wales. What more stupendous can Art contrive than the Alps? What more sublime than the thunder among the hills? The savage is far-sighted; his eye, like the Poet's, —

"Doth glance from Heaven to Earth, from Earth to Heaven."

He looks far into futurity, wandering as familiarly through the Land of Spirits, as the civilized man through his woodlot or pleasure-grounds. His life is practical poetry, a perfect epic. The earth is his hunting-ground; he lives summers and winters; the sun is his time-piece, — he journeys to its rising or its setting; to the abode of Winter, or the land whence Summer comes. He never listens to the thunder but he is reminded of the Great Spirit, — it is *his* voice. To him the lightning is less terrible than it is sublime; the

rainbow less beautiful than it is wonderful; the sun less warm than it is glorious.

The savage dies and is buried; he sleeps with his forefathers, and before many winters his dust returns to dust again, and his body is mingled with the elements. The civilized man can scarce sleep even in his grave. Not even there are the weary at rest, nor do the wicked cease from troubling. What with the hammering of stone, and the grating of bolts, the worms themselves are wellnigh deceived. Art rears his monument, Learning contributes his epitaph, and Interest adds the "Carey fecit" as a salutary check upon the unearthly emotions which a perusal might otherwise excite.

A nation may be ever so civilized, and yet lack wisdom. Wisdom is the result of education; and education being the bringing-out or development of that which is in man, by contact with the Not-me, — that is by Life, — is far safer in the hands of Nature than of Art.

The savage may be, and often is a sage. Our Indian is more of a man than the inhabitant of a city. He lives as a man, he thinks as a man, he dies as a man. The latter, it is true, is learned. Learning is Art's creature, but it is not essential to the perfect man; it cannot educate. A man may spend days in the study of a single species of *animalculæ*, invisible to the naked eye, and thus become the founder of a new branch of science, — without having advanced the great objects for which life was given him, at all. The naturalist, the chemist, the mechanist is no more a

man for all his learning. Life is still as short as ever, death as inevitable, and the heavens as far off.

Here in 1837 we have a vivid glimpse of the later Thoreau — reviling the very art that has given him the rhetoric with which to denounce Art.

> "Lowliness is young Ambition's ladder,
> Whereto the climber upward turns his face;
> But when he once attains the upmost round,
> He then unto the ladder turns his back,
> . . . . . scorning the base degrees
> By which he did ascend."

He has mastered his art at last, has caught his stride, as they say, and has entered fully into the goodly land of paradox.

In contrast with this glorification of the savage, and criminal indictment against civilization, ancient and modern, take this fragment, composed at the very close of his college life and endorsed, "Thoreau, June 10, 1837": —

XXVII. Titus Pomponius Atticus, as an Example

One cannot safely imitate the actions, as such, even of the wise and good. Truth is not exalted, but rather degraded and soiled by contact with humanity. We may not conform ourselves to any mortal pattern, but should conform our every act and thought to Truth.

Truth is that whole of which Virtue, Justice, Benevolence and the like are the parts, the manifestations; she includes and runs through them all. She is continually revealing herself. Why, then, be satisfied with the mere reflection of her genial warmth and light? why dote upon her faint and fleeting echo, if we can bask in her sunshine, and hearken to her revelations when we will? No man is so situated that he may not, if he choose, find her out; and when he has discovered her, he may without fear go all lengths with her; but if he take her at second hand, it must be done cautiously; else she will not be pure and unmixed.

Wherever she manifests herself, whether in God, in man, or in nature, by herself considered, she is equally admirable, equally inviting; though to our view she seems, from her relations, now stern and repulsive, now mild and persuasive. We will then consider Truth by herself, so that we may the more heartily adore her, and more confidently follow her.

Next, how far was the life of Atticus a manifestation of Truth? According to Nepos, his Latin biographer: "He so carried himself as to seem level with the lowest, and yet equal to the highest. He never sued for any preferment in the State, because it was not to be obtained by fair and honorable means. He never went to law about anything. He never altered his manner of life, though his estate was greatly increased. His complaisance was not without a strict regard to truth."

Truth neither exalteth nor humbleth herself. She is

not too high for the low, nor yet too low for the high. She never stoops to what is mean or dishonorable. She is persuasive, not litigious, leaving Conscience to decide. Circumstances do not affect her. She never sacrificeth her dignity that she may secure for herself a favorable reception. Thus far the example of Atticus may safely be followed. But we are told, on the other hand: "That, finding it impossible to live suitably to his dignity at Rome, without offending one party or the other, he withdrew to Athens. That he left Italy that he might not bear arms against Sylla. That he so *managed* by taking no active part, as to secure the good will of *both* Cæsar and Pompey. Finally, that he was careful to avoid even the appearance of crime."

It is not a characteristic of Truth to use men tenderly, nor is she over-anxious about appearances. The honest man, according to George Herbert, — is

> "He that doth still and strongly good pursue,
> To God, his neighbor and himself most true;
> Whom neither fear nor fawning can
> Unpin, or wrench from giving all their due.
> Who rides his sure and even trot,
> While the World now rides by, now lags behind.
> Who, when great trials come,
> Nor seeks nor shuns them, but doth always stay
> Till he the thing, and the example weigh;
> All being brought into a sum,
> What place or person calls for, he doth pay."

Atticus seems to have well understood the maxim applied to him by his biographer, — "*Sui cuique mores fingunt fortunam.*" (Character shapes his lot for each of us.)

HENRY DAVID THOREAU

It seems odd that Henry Thoreau, poor, obscure, in a small Puritan village, should have looked to see how a Roman plutocrat, living in luxury and by usury, waited upon by slaves, and more Epicurean than Stoic, could serve as an example for one who went to prison rather than pay a small tax for the indirect support of American slavery. But, no doubt, Atticus, with all his defects, was a more suitable model for an outdoor life than Red Jacket, Black Hawk, Massasoit, or Tecumseh. The ideal Red Man of Henry and John Thoreau was a panegyrized Tahattawan, Sachem of the Musketaquid, to whom they erected a cenotaph on Fairhaven Hill, near the present villa of Mr. Thompson, with this inscription in questionable Latin: —

Siste, qui conscendis! Hic Filius Naturæ, Tahattawan, Sachimaupan, extremus Indorum, venatus, resipiscatus est. Per agros, prata, collemque regnavit. At, si famæ credendum est, manus non longas habuit. Homo, Princeps, Christianus, quamvis incultus, non indeploratus. In moribus scilicet austerus, et sine levitate; sermone grandis, venustus, immo etiam modicus!! Integritate, fortitudineque explorata, præclarus.

Hic Scopulus ejus est Cenotaphium.

Should a statue of Thoreau ever be erected in Concord, these cliffs, where the brothers com-

memorated their Indian ideal, would be the proper place for it, and the rock itself might be carved into his aquiline features.

No such encomium on the American Indian appeared in the last of Thoreau's college essays, — his Commencement Part, which was an analysis of the American commercial spirit given as one half of a "Conference" on that topic, of which his roommate, Henry Vose, gave the other half. The greater portion of Thoreau's half is printed in his volume of "Familiar Letters"; but a few passages may be quoted to show his settled and serious style at the age of twenty. It was given August 16, 1837: —

The characteristic of our epoch is perfect freedom, — freedom of thought and action. It has generated an unusual degree of energy and activity; it has generated the Commercial Spirit. Man thinks faster and freer than ever before; he moves faster and freer. He is more restless because he is more independent than ever. . . . We are to look chiefly for the origin of the commercial spirit, and the power that still cherishes and sustains it, in a blind and unmanly love of wealth. Wherever this exists, it is too sure to become the ruling spirit; and as a natural consequence, it infuses into all our thoughts and affections a degree of its own selfishness; we become selfish in our patriotism, selfish in our domestic relations, selfish in our religion. . . . Yet it is

not altogether and without exception bad. We rejoice in it as one more indication of the entire and universal freedom of the age in which we live, — an indication that the human race is making one more advance in that infinite series of progressions which awaits it. Man will not always be the slave of Matter; but ere long, casting off those earth-born desires which identify him with the brute, shall pass the days of his sojourn in this his nether paradise, as becomes the Lord of the Creation.

With this glowing anticipation of an age which has not yet arrived, Thoreau withdrew to Concord, whither a letter from James Richardson, an equally enthusiastic classmate, followed him three weeks later, with this bit of information: —

I hear that you are comfortably located in your native town, as the guardian of its children, in the immediate vicinity of one of our most distinguished apostles of the Future, R. W. Emerson, and situated under the ministry of our old friend, Rev. Barzillai Frost. I hear also that Concord Academy, lately under the care of Mr. Phineas Allen of Northfield, is now [Sept. 7] vacant of a Preceptor.

For this vacancy Richardson offers himself, "should Mr. Hoar find it difficult to get a scholar college-distinguished." For this vacancy Thoreau was not even considered, probably; for he had just taken charge of the Town Grammar

School, and given it up because he was unwilling to punish its pupils by whipping. The Academy building soon became available for the private school of John and Henry Thoreau; but in the interval Henry sought occupation as a teacher elsewhere.

CHAPTER V

PENCIL-MAKING SCHOOLMASTERS AND THEIR SCHOOL

It has been the direction of many wise and careful fathers that their sons, even if destined for the governing class, or the learned professions, should also have a handworking occupation, to fall back upon in an emergency or for the incidental discipline that it gives. The original needs of the Thoreau family gave a pencil-making trade to both John and Henry, as boys; and during the decade 1830–40 the trade name of these pencil-makers was "J. Thoreau and Sons." John happened to be also a natural teacher and an agreeable head of a school; in the latter capacity more naturally gifted than Henry; so that when John withdrew in ill health from their Concord School (1841), in the large building on Academy Lane, Henry also gave it up. Before it was begun, however, in 1838, and at intervals after its close, both brothers engaged in pencil-making, in which Henry had great skill and much chemical knowledge. But Henry had tried for a school in Maine on several occasions, and the two brothers had

planned an excursion westward, as far as Kentucky, hoping either for a joint school, such as they taught in Concord for three years, or for separate schools not far apart, such as Carlyle and his friend Edward Irving had for a time near Edinburgh.

Henry left college with his spirit of independence and opposition more fully developed than when he entered. In this particular he differed much from his seniors, Alcott and Emerson; and it gave to his conversation a tone that his orthodox sister Helen thought required some softening. Her remarks led Henry to suspend his letters to her, which he thus explained in a letter of October, 1837, which Emerson copied for his volume of Thoreau's "Letters and Poems," but omitted to print, and turned it and some of the poems over to me. Henry wrote: —

For a man to act himself he must be perfectly free; otherwise he is in danger of losing all sense of responsibility or self-respect. When such a state of things exists that the sacred opinions one advances in argument are apologized for by his friends, before his face, lest his hearers receive a wrong impression of the man; — when such gross injustice is of frequent occurrence, — where shall we look, and not look in vain, for men, deeds, thoughts? As well apologize for the grape that

it is sour, or the thunder that it is noisy, or the lightning that it tarries not.

Yet this gentle elder sister had brought his young disciple to Emerson's intimacy by showing him (through another, Mrs. Emerson's sister) a passage in her brother's new Journal of 1837 which indicated "the same thought, the same spirit" that was naturally in both the Poet-Philosopher and the younger Poet-Naturalist. That Journal, begun October 20, 1837, ran to 546 pages, and was long since destroyed, after excerpts from it had been made for "The Service," the "Raleigh," the "Week," and "Walden." It did not, seemingly, contain many of the original verses; these were probably entered in a "long Red Book," of which no index survives. But I have the index of this prose Journal, of which I give here some specimens: —

Oct. 24. The Mould our Deeds leave. Every part of nature teaches that the passing away of one life is the making room for another. The Oak dies down to the ground, leaving within its rind a rich virgin mould, which will impart a vigorous life to an infant forest. The pine leaves a sandy and sterile soil; the harder woods a strong and fruitful mould. So this constant abrasion and decay makes the soil of my future growth.

HELEN THOREAU

Oct. 29. *Two Ducks at Goose Pond*, of the summer or wood species, which were merrily dabbling in their favorite basin, struck up a retreat on my approach, paddling off with swan-like majesty. They dove every minute or two, and swam several feet under water, to escape our attention. They seemed to give each other a significant nod, — and then, as if by a common understanding, 't was heels up and head down in the shaking of a duck's wing. When they reappeared, it was significant to observe with what a self-satisfied, "darn-it-how-he-nicks-'em" air, they paddled off to repeat the experiment.

Nov. 3. *Sailing with and against the Stream.* If one would reflect, let him embark on some placid stream, and float with the current. As we ascend the stream, plying the paddle with might and main, snatched and impetuous thoughts course through the brain. We dream of conflict, power and grandeur. But turn the prow down stream, and rock, tree, kine, knoll, assuming new and varying positions, as wind and water shift the scene, favor the liquid lapse of thought, far-reaching and sublime, but ever calm and gently undulating.

Sunday, March 4. Here at my elbow sit five notable, or at least noteworthy representatives of this 19th century, of the gender feminine. One a sedate, indefatigable knitter, not spinster [Mrs. Colonel Ward], of the old school, who had the supreme felicity to be born in days that tried men's souls. . . . Opposite,

across this stone hearth, sits one of no school, but one who schools [Louisa Dunbar] — a spinster who spins not, with elbow resting on the Book of Books. I marked how she spurned that innocent everyday book, "Germany, by De Staël," as though a viper had stung her; — better to rest the elbow on The Book than the eye on such a page.

(The other three were probably Miss Prudence Ward, Mrs. Thoreau, and Maria.)

In 1837 Henry had one or two of his vexatious affairs with some of his townsmen, if we may trust the not always exact statements of Channing. Thoreau himself wrote in his Journal for December, 1855, "Kept town school for a fortnight in 1837 (?)," which must have been in September. Channing writes: —

An early experience was the Town School, which he took after leaving college, announcing that he should not flog, but would talk morals as a punishment instead. A fortnight sped glibly along, when a knowing Deacon, one of the school committee, walked in and told him that he must use the ferule, or the school would spoil. So he did, — feruling six of his pupils after school; one of whom was the maid-servant in his own house. But it did not suit well with his conscience; and he reported to the Committee that he should no longer keep their school if they interfered with his arrangements; *they* could keep it.

Naturally this would excite unfavorable comment, as his accidentally setting Deacon Wheeler's woods on fire did in 1844, and his refusal to pay taxes to support slavery did in 1846; and as no doubt he did when he "signed off" from Dr. Ripley's First Parish, and thus exempted himself from church attendance and church taxes. This was that same eventful year, 1837–38, when he sang Emerson's Hymn at the dedication of the Battle Monument, July 4; had a part at Commencement; became intimate with Emerson; began to keep a regular journal; and had other native experiences.

His first real business after leaving college was to aid his father in the pencil-factory, as he had done in some way in 1836. But then it became clear to him that, of several vocations that he might practise, and afterwards did, teaching came easiest to him, and he began to look for a school. In one of his collegiate paradoxes he had written:

> What we regard as a tendency to extremes is often a tendency to the extremely true. This is peculiarly the case when men, having discovered a truth, fear to follow it out, lest they go to extremes. The truth is, Truth is extremely far from Falsehood; and as mankind manage to preserve a happy medium between the two, they are at a considerable distance from either.

But Truth leads directly to action; she calls for a practical application. In satisfying this demand, men are most likely to err. Truth pursues so straight a course in the outset, that men take it for granted she never deviates from a right line. The human mind, with Truth in prospect, may be likened to a vibrating pendulum. A perpendicular position was to be attained; but such was the impulse originally given, that it continues for a long time to assume an infinite variety of positions, each successively nearer the required one, ere the force of gravity can overcome the foreign influence, and induce rest.

This is an ingenious parable, foreshowing the successive positions in life assumed by Henry Thoreau, before he reached that one best adapted to his peculiar genius, and giving him the exact blend of activity and leisure that his health required. Far from being the robust person that Emerson's view of his spiritual strength implies, he was of rather a frail constitution, and was often ill, as we see by his letters and diaries. After a boyhood of domestic industry and active sport, he took up school-teaching (as so many men of letters have done); on which he thus expressed himself in the script just quoted: "If we engage in teaching from proper motives, we shall invariably make it a permanent profession; those who do otherwise regard it as a means. And this they

may safely do, if as a means to something higher. But no, — their end is within, not beyond their means; the end was soon attained, and the means neglected." This is a short history, but not the whole story of the Thoreau school-keeping.

The four sons and daughters of this rare household were naturally teachers, — Henry less gifted in that way, perhaps, than his brother John, or his elder sister Helen. Grace of manner was hardly a trait of Henry at any time, though he was of inbred courtesy and gravely considerate, as I have seen in many instances. Helen, who resembled in aspect her aunt Louisa Dunbar, was noted for the grace of her manners and her social gift — which Sophia had in a less degree. In Concord, Helen taught music, in which all the household were gifted — Henry and his mother both singing a good part in youth. The parents of Helen's pupils valued her also as an example to them in politeness. John, next in age to Helen, was a person of affable and attractive manners, though direct and frank of speech, and independent in opinion.

I have had in my hands for years, through the kindness of the Ward family of Spencer, Massachusetts, the correspondence of Mrs. Colonel Joseph Ward, widow of a Boston Revolu-

tionary officer, and her daughter, Miss Prudence Ward. These ladies were for more than a dozen years, after 1833, residents of Concord Village, and intimate with all branches of the Thoreau family; with some of whom they usually resided and whose political views they shared. From 1835, when John Thoreau left the Shattuck house, he and his children lived in the family house on the Square, and it was from the bridge on the Lowell road that Henry made his early voyage in the Red Jacket, in August, 1836. When they moved into the Parkman house, at the Sudbury Corner the Wards went with them. There Henry planted melons and made pencils, in the sale of which he had visited New York with his father in 1836. In the autumn of 1837 he stayed at home and journalized, indexing his thoughts in the Journal above mentioned, his first large manuscript volume, as thus: —

Reflection in still water, P. 10; Our action relieved against the sky, 11; Value of the Actual, 12; Approach of Evening on the Water, 15; A day in a Swamp, 16; Landscape through a Tumbler, 17; Sphericity, 19; Chief stress on Likeness, 23; The meeting of Men, 25; Books and History, 26; Friendliness of Music, 31; The Drum at night, 31; Tent life, 38; Dogs baying the Moon, 42; Inspiration of the Body, 43, 48; etc.

PRUDENCE BIRD WARD (MRS. JOSEPH WARD) AT TWENTY-ONE

From a Miniature

This passage, no doubt, answered in the Journal to the index of "Sphericity": —

> The brave man is a perfect sphere, which cannot fall on its flat side, and is equally strong every way. The coward is wretchedly spheroidal at best, too much educated or drawn out on one side, and depressed on the other. . . . We shall not attain to be spherical by lying on one or the other side for an eternity, but only by resigning ourselves implicitly to the law of gravity in us, shall we find our axis coincident with the celestial axis; and by revolving incessantly through all circles, acquire a perfect sphericity. Mankind, like the Earth, revolve mainly from west to east, and so are flattened at the poles. But does not Philosophy give hint of a movement commencing to be rotary at the poles too, which in a millennium will have acquired increased rapidity, and help restore an equilibrium?

This appears in my edition of the "Service" (1902) and was a part of that manuscript which I read to the School of Philosophy, and to an audience at my house, in 1881, at which, for the last time, met Alcott, Emerson, Louisa Alcott, and Walt Whitman, — the latter visiting me that September. The letter of Margaret Fuller praising and rejecting it from the "Dial" in January, 1841, was also read on that occasion.

In March, 1838, Thoreau was looking toward

Kentucky for a place to find pupils, and wrote to his brother at Taunton: —

> Suppose we should start in company for the West and there either establish a school jointly, or procure ourselves separate situations. Go I must, at all events. It is high season to start. The canals are now open, and travelling comparatively cheap. I think I can borrow the cash in this town. There's nothing like trying.

This Kentucky adventure was suggested by Dr. Edward Jarvis, a physician of Concord birth and education, who had settled at Louisville, as a good place for a family doctor; but who soon became a specialist in nervous and mental disease, and had much fame as a statistical author. The journey was never taken, for reasons that may be found in Miss Ward's letters to her sister, Mrs. Edmund Sewall, of Scituate, who, as Caroline Ward, had married a first cousin of Mrs. Bronson Alcott, not yet a resident of Concord: —

> *March*, 1838. Mrs. John Thoreau's children are soon to leave her; Helen and Sophia to keep school in Roxbury, and John and Henry to go West. They purpose instructing there, but have no fixed plan. They will go as far as Louisville in Kentucky, unless employment can be found nearer. . . . To-day, April 13, Henry has had a letter from President Quincy, of

Harvard, speaking of a school in Alexandria, Virginia, to be opened the 5th of May. He is willing to take it, and if accepted, this may alter or delay their journey. (May 2.) Mr. Thoreau has begun to prepare his garden, and I have been digging the flower-beds. Henry has left us this morning, to try and obtain a school at the eastward (in Maine). John has taken one in West Roxbury. Helen is in another part of Roxbury, establishing herself in a boarding and day-school. Sophia will probably be wanted there as an assistant; so the family are disposed of. I shall miss the juvenile members very much; for they are the most important part of the establishment.

Henry's trip to Maine was interesting to him in its incidents, and as making him better acquainted with his cousins at Bangor, the Lowells and Thatchers, descendants of John Thoreau the Jerseyman and Jeanie Burns, of Scotch Stirlingshire. But no school could be found there, and the two brothers decided to open a private school in their father's Parkman house, which was spacious and central in the village. It began with a few pupils before John returned from West Roxbury, but was under his direct charge, while Henry taught Latin, Greek, and French, and the higher mathematics, if called for. It increased in numbers so fast that the next year it was removed to the building in Academy Lane, the

regular school in which was given up, when Mr. Allen, who had taught there, took charge of a school at Northfield in the Connecticut Valley. An important person as it proved, Miss Ellen Sewall, a niece of Miss Ward, visited her aunt and grandmother at Concord, in the summer of 1838, and her brother Edmund became a pupil of the Thoreaus that year. The next year (April 5, 1839) in a letter to one of his aunts, he makes the first mention I have seen of the famous boat: —

I am going to school in Concord to a Mr. Thoreau, who is a very pleasant schoolmaster. Saturdays we do nothing but write compositions. I have been out to sail once in Mr. Thoreau's boat. He has a very good boat, which he and his brother built themselves. The river was high, and we sailed very fast a part of the way.

The school had begun in June, 1838, with four boys from Boston, boarding at the Parkman house. On June 29, Miss Ward wrote: —

There are four boys from Boston boarding with us. I want Ellen Sewall should make us a visit of a week or two. Henry's melons are flourishing; he has over 60 hills, and we are likely to have an abundance. Our flower-garden looks very gay.

MISS PRUDENCE WARD

July 8, Henry wrote offering to take a vacation when John had his, the first of August, — showing that his reputation, rather than John's, set the school going and that there was a fifth boy engaged; adding this: —

> I am in school from 8 to 12 in the morning, and from 2 to 4 P.M. After that I read a little Greek or English, or for variety, take a stroll in the woods. We have not had such a year for berries this long time, — the earth is actually blue with them. High blueberries, three kinds of low, thimble and raspberries constitute my diet at present. Among my deeds of charity I may reckon the picking of a cherry-tree for two helpless single ladies who live under the hill.

This may illustrate what Channing afterward said of "Henry's edible religion."

It was a school only for boys, and it adopted some of Mr. Alcott's new rules with regard to amusements, walks, and punishments. One of the Concord boys, the late Henry Warren, in later years at Chicago, has preserved for me many memories of this Thoreau School, which he entered at the age of twelve. It soon became popular, and received all the pupils there was space for in the rooms of the Academy but a few rods from the home of the instructors. When a boy applied for admission, John Thoreau would ques-

tion him thus, "You say you would like to enter our school; why do you wish that?" The boy would reply that he wished or his father wished him to study Latin, Greek, algebra, geometry, surveying, etc., which he heard were taught there. John would then say, "If you really wish to study those things, we can teach you, if you will obey our rules and promise to give your mind to your studies; but if you come to idle and play, or to see other boys study, we shall not want you for a pupil. Do you promise, then, to do what we require? if so, we will do our best to teach you what we know ourselves."

The boy would promise; then if he was idle or mischievous, he was reminded that he had broken his word; but physical penalties were but little resorted to. One new feature was a weekly walk in the woods or pastures, or a sail or row on the river, or a swim in one of the ponds of the township, Walden or White or Bateman's Pond; and there was much instructive talk about the Indians who formerly lived or hunted there. The large boat which the brothers had built in the early spring of 1839, near the steam mill, not far from my present house and garden, was often used in these excursions.

In one of the voyages downstream toward

Ball's Hill and Carlisle Bridge, Mr. Warren remembered an instance of Henry's close observation in the matter of Indian antiquities, of which both brothers early became connoisseurs. As they were sailing through the Great Meadows, past Ball's Hill, where Mr. Brewster has since made his woodland preserve for migrating birds, Henry Thoreau called attention to a spot on the river-shore, where he fancied the Indians had made their fires, and perhaps had a fishing village. There, he said, if he had a spade, he could perchance uncover one of their rude fireplaces. "We cannot find one to-day, for we have no spade; but the next time we come I will see if that was the place of habitation." Coming to land there the next week, they drew the boat to shore, and moved up the bank a little way. "Do you see," said Henry, "anything here that would be likely to attract Indians to this spot?" One boy said, "Why, here is the river for their fishing"; another pointed to the woodland near by, which could give them game. "Well, is there anything else?" pointing out a small rivulet that must come, he said, from a spring not far off, which could furnish water cooler than the river in summer; and a hillside above it that would keep off the north and northwest wind in winter.

Then, moving inland a little farther, and looking carefully about, he struck in his spade several times, without result. Presently, when the boys began to think their young teacher and guide was mistaken, his spade struck a stone. Moving forward a foot or two, he set his spade in again, struck another stone, and began to dig in a circle. He soon uncovered the red, fire-marked stones of the long-disused Indian fireplace; thus proving that he had been right in his conjecture. Having settled the point, he carefully covered up his find and replaced the turf, — not wishing to have the domestic altar of the aborigines profaned by mere curiosity.

On another walk he suddenly stopped, knelt down, and examined the ground with some care; then, plucking a minute something, he asked Henry Warren if he could see that? "Yes, — but what about it?" Drawing his microscope, Thoreau showed the boy that, thus magnified, this little thing was a perfect flower, just then in the season of its blossoming; and he went on to say that he had become so well acquainted with the flowers, large and small, of Concord and Acton and Lincoln, that without looking in the almanac, he could tell by the blooming of the flowers in what month he was. All this with no

evident wish to display his own superior knowledge, but only to impress on the youthful mind how immense is the sum of Nature's activities, and to impart to others his own skill in such matters.

This trait could not fail to be noticed by the friendly pen of Channing, who, in that wonder-book of quotations, his final Life of Thoreau, says: —

> Never in too much hurry for a dish of gossip, he could sit out the oldest frequenter of the barroom [so could Hawthorne] and was alive from top to toe with curiosity. But if he learned, so he taught, and says, "I could take one or twenty into partnership, gladly sharing my gains." On his return from a journey, he not only emptied his pack of flowers, shells, seeds, and other treasures, but liberally contributed every fine or pleasant or desirable experience to those who needed, as the milkweed distributes its lustrous, silken seeds. Connected with this was his skill in asking questions, — a natural talent, long cultivated. Ever on the search for knowledge, he lived to get information; and as I am so far like Alfieri that I have almost no curiosity, I once said to him how surprised I was at the persistence of this trait in him. "What else is there in life?" was his reply. He did not end in this search with farmers, nor the broadcloth world; he knew another class of men, who hang on the outskirts of society, — those who love grog and are never to be

seen abroad without a fishpole or a gun in their hands, — with elfish locks and of a community with Nature not to be surpassed. They lived more outdoors than he did, and faced more mud and water without flinching; sitting all day in the puddles like frogs, with a line in the river, catching pouts, or wading mid-leg in marshes to shoot woodcock. I never knew him to go by this class without the due conversation. They had a sort of Indian or gypsy life, and he loved to get this at second hand. He had sufficient innocence for both sides in these interviews.

Mr. Warren went on to say that, out of school, and for years after, he would take the trouble to answer any question of his pupils whom he might meet with their problems; and if he could not solve them at once, he would take the question home, and give them the answer the next time he met the young inquirer. Being asked why so interesting a school was given up, Mr. Warren said that the health of John Thoreau began to fail, in the family pulmonary disease, and he withdrew on that account from the school in the Academy, which could not be carried on without him, who was its real head; although Henry, from his collegiate studies, taught the more advanced pupils. Both were equally interested in Indian life, and John had made many collections of implements, weapons, etc., at Taunton in the Old

Colony, where they were as abundant as in Concord, and in which region fragments of the Indian tribes much longer remained — indeed, are yet to be found there.

In September, 1838, the two brothers were teaching together, in great amity, as they always lived; but in the village there was a prejudice, slight or strong, against a youth like Henry, just one-and-twenty, who had so much independence of thought and action. The number of pupils gained under John; for it was found that a boy learned more in a month at the Thoreau School than at the Town School under the Freemasons' Lodge, where inattention, mischief, and whipping were in vogue. It was no uncommon thing for three or four boys there to be "kept after school" for idleness or roguery, and to be soundly whipped by the strong-armed master, selected, in part, for his muscular potency. The Thoreaus never whipped; they made the "recess" half an hour long, instead of the traditional ten minutes; they opened the school windows and ventilated the room, so that the boys came back to fresh air, after playing heartily with one of the teachers. Upon occasion, John or Henry stopped the dull recitation, and told a story, or conveyed a pleasing moral lesson, at which John was as apt as

Henry, though less learned and paradoxical. So the minds of the boys were kept open and awake; they coöperated in the school discipline, instead of resisting it, as schoolboys are wont to do; and they were found by their parents to have acquired much general knowledge, as well as that conveyed in their textbooks, many of which I have seen. Consequently, it was soon needful for the school to leave the Parkman house, spacious as it was, and to engage one of the two large rooms at the Academy — not yet removed to a houselot on the new Middle Street, where it was turned into two tenements, and in 1866 bought by Ellery Channing and occupied by him for twenty-five years. There every green desk was soon filled with pupils, and boys were required to wait for a vacancy from term to term, before they could be admitted. There were four terms in a year which was longer than the present school year; the tuition was but five dollars a term unless advanced studies were pursued; the full number of pupils, Mr. Warren thought, was twenty-five.

While in the full tide of this success, modest and deserved, it was announced in 1841 that it would be closed in a few days on account of the ill health of John Thoreau, then twenty-six years

old, who seems to have had warning of that insidious family malady (consumption) of which his grandfather, John, the Jersey immigrant, and four of his eight children, had already died, — Mary, Nancy, David, and Sarah, — usually before the age of thirty. When asked why longer notice had not been given of so important a matter, John replied that if it had been given, none of the pupils would have studied; for it was with much regret that these lively and instructive classes were closed. The next winter, in February, in consequence of a slight accident, John died of lockjaw, to the inconsolable grief of his brother and the family. He was a flowing and generous spirit, as one friend described him, and seems to have won the first affections of Ellen Sewall, who did not engage herself to Rev. Joseph Osgood, of Kensington and Cohasset, until after John Thoreau's death.

The comparative pecuniary prosperity of the Thoreau family had begun some years before Henry graduated, with their skill in making lead pencils — an art introduced in Concord about 1812 by the Monroes. William Monroe (father of the giver of the fine library and art building now standing where the Thoreaus began their school) was the inventor of a process that proved

successful; and from 1812 to 1833 he was the principal maker of the article in Concord. John Thoreau took up the manufacture before 1830, and carried it to higher perfection, aided by the chemical and mechanical skill of his sons. At the outset he employed the same miller (Ebenezer Wood) to grind his plumbago whom Mr. Monroe had set up in his business; and when Mr. Monroe wished to shut out his competitor from the use of the mill, in the town of Acton, he was not able to do so, and the mill went into the sole employ of the Thoreaus. They continued to make pencils until 1853, and Henry was active in the manufacture and sale from 1836 for almost twenty years. Then the business changed form, and became the preparation of fine plumbago for electrotyping. It was carried on by Henry in this form for the family, after his father's death in 1859, and by Sophia after Henry's death in 1862. Finally it passed into the hands of two brothers, Marshall and Warren Miles, and gradually ceased to be so profitable as when Henry and his father were active in it.

The anecdote for which Emerson in 1862 made himself responsible — that Henry, having made a pencil as good as any sent over from Europe, declined to go on with the process — lacks a

basis in fact, though it may have some warrant in Thoreau's petulant expression. He replied, says Emerson, "that he should never make another pencil; why should I?" This remark was not later than 1850, and probably was made before 1845. Yet he says in his published Journal (November, 1853), "I was obliged to manufacture a thousand dollars' worth of pencils and slowly dispose of and finally sacrifice them, in order to pay an assumed debt of a hundred dollars." His improvements in the art were probably all in the way of grinding the plumbago finer, and reducing its grittiness by new ingredients, better than the bayberry wax used by the Monroes. Add to this the fact of access to a superior mine of black lead in Canada, and we have the secret of the success that certainly attended the business from 1840 onward.

All the memories of John Thoreau the younger are pleasing, if pathetic. He held himself less aloof from society than Henry did afterward, and had little of his brother's censoriousness. He was intimate with the printer and editor William Robinson, afterwards better known by his assumed name of "Warrington" as a witty newspaper correspondent. In 1842 Robinson was absent from Concord, and a friend wrote to him these particulars of John's short illness and death: —

I cannot close without referring to the sudden death of our friend John Thoreau, whom you knew and loved so well. In the evening of Saturday, January 29, he went to Dr. Bartlett, who dressed his wounded finger; and with no apprehension of further difficulty, he walked home. On the way he had strange sensations, — acute pains in various parts, and was hardly able to get home, though but a short distance. Sunday night he had violent spasms, and lockjaw set in. Being told he must die a speedy and painful death, he was unmoved. "Is there no hope?" he asked. "None," said the doctor. Then, although his friends around him were almost distracted, John was calm, saying, "The cup that my Father gives me, shall I not drink it?" He bade his friends all good-bye; and twice he mentioned your name. Not long before death he thought he had written something; and he said, "I will carry it down to Robinson, — he will like to read it." He died Tuesday afternoon, with as much cheerfulness and composure as if only going a short journey.

It is singular that few letters or essays of his have been preserved; all that we find now are letters and two stanzas of religious verse, in the handwriting of his younger sister, Sophia: —

I will not lead a feverish life,
To pleasure and to folly given,
And sink the soul in petty strife
The Father calls to Heaven.

Be this the Eden of my soul, —
A second Adam's paradise,
When I obey Jehovah's call, —
Nor shrink with dread that comes of vice.

On the reverse of the page where Henry had written his "Voyager's Song," another hand inscribed this poem, which may have been meant for John: —

Change Not

Be ever thus! though years must roll
And add their wrinkles to thy cheek:
Still let thy ever-youthful soul
In word and action live and speak!
Unknowing of a wicked thought,
Untouched by any act of sin,
And all ungoverned and untaught
Save by the Monitor within.

Thou shalt know nothing of the things
That breed Earth's countless quarrellings:
Yet of the harmony of the Sage,
The Poet's rhyme, the Scholar's page,
All that is pure and true shall be
A gift of instinct unto thee,
And so, as guileless and as wild,
Thou shalt live on and die, — a Child.

Letter of John Thoreau, Jr.

CONCORD, *Oct.* 18, 1833.

FRIEND STEARNS: —

You will see by this epistle that I am in the land of Harmony; yea, verily, I am a sojourner in the tents of

the peaceful. I intended to have written you last week, but was not well. I had the nose *bleed* (ignoble complaint) on cattle-show day to such an extent that I fainted from loss of blood, and was not able to participate in the festivities of the day. I have since been rather weak, and have not taken much exercise. I am now gaining fast, and contemplate many pedestrian excursions. . . .

I received your letter, and was extremely shocked at your vituperation of "Nature's first, best gift to man": you called the portion under your immediate observation, *flat* & *insipid*. . . .

Perhaps these damsels are not so bad as you imagine; you know the poet says "Women should have a winning softness." You must have more charity. The world is under an obligation to women which it can never *repay;* although some have the audacity to assert that a considerable portion of womankind are engaged in liquidating it at this present time, yet I consider it as base calumny and slander.

When I recommend to you the exercise of more charity, I do not mean that charity which is without discretion. "That thou mayst regard discretion; and that thy lips may keep knowledge; for the lips of a strange woman are as a honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil." . . .

For my part I am exempt from all such temptations; as there is naught here save a few antiquated spinsters, or December virgins, if you will; and well may I sing, "What's this dull town to me? no girls are here."

S[arah] & E[lizabeth] Hoar are in the city still. Sarah is coming up to enliven this wilderness in about six weeks; and as I shall probably be here, I shall, as I said before, take every opportunity of testifying my admiration of your choice. Jealousy is tormenting one's self for fear of being tormented by another; have none of it, my dear fellow. You must not suppose that while you slumbered, "the enemy came and sowed tares"; no, my dear Othello, I claim her by right of a first discoverer: though perhaps you think that this may terminate like the discovery of our Continent, in being discovered by one, and *named* after another.

In this respect I presume you have faith; we read it is the substance of things *hoped* for. (Hope you'll swallow this last morceau, as a corrective of the pills;) and I pray, George, you will not suffer these intimations to disturb your equanimity. I exhort you to patience; for I beg it may not be said of me, as was said of the immortal Gilpin: "'So! fair and softly!' John he cried, but John he cried in vain."

Henry and Stearns Wheeler walked up from Cambridge last week. Henry blistered his feet very badly; he said he walked two miles in his stockings; he was three hours coming from Lincoln; he made quite a short visit.

Mr. [Phineas] Allen's school is quite full; he has over fifty scholars, mostly small, however. Perhaps you are aware he has engaged Miss Lucy F. Barrett as an assistant.

A Temperance Society was formed here about a week since, Rev. Dr. Ripley, President.

Is your situation in any degree rendered pleasanter? I hope it will be such as to admit of your writing to me frequently. You must excuse my writing, as I have no lines; and our accommodations for [such] effusions are very poor. (See P. B.)

I shall not promise you much satisfaction in perusing my letters, and *news* is actually obsolete in this place. I hope you will conclude to pay us a visit soon. So, wishing you escape from certain green-eyed monsters, I shall, until some refulgent orb (in the shape of a bevy of fair damsels) shines upon this deserted land, subscribe myself,

Yours from Sahara

JOHN THOREAU.[1]

P.S. Please present my respects to your Brothers, and write soon.

MR. GEORGE STEARNS, WOBURN, MASS.

[1] John was two years younger than Helen, and three years older than Henry, being at this date nineteen. Naturally, at that age, the thoughts of young men lightly turn to love; and the young ladies here mentioned, the daughters of Samuel Hoar, Esq., leader of the Middlesex Bar, and granddaughters of Roger Sherman, lately graduates of Mr. Allen's Concord Academy, where probably George Stearns, of a clerical family, had also been a pupil, with John and Henry Thoreau, were the most desirable matches in town. Not that such gossip as in this correspondence was anything more than pardonable compliment. So far as John Thoreau's attentions were directed to any one damsel in the village, until they were attracted by Ellen Sewall, they seem to have fallen on another young lady less eligible. But, by the easy code of civility in this Puritan Democracy, any youth, admitted to the schools, balls, and parties, might "pay attentions" to any damsel he met there. The weekly Lyceum, the Masonic balls, and the parties of the Concord Artillery, and many other social opportunities were afforded for the natural meeting of the sexes.

CHAPTER VI

THE WEEK ON THE RIVERS

ALTHOUGH it was ten years after the river voyage was made that its story was made public, it had yet served as a step in the progress of Thoreau toward his life work — that of an observer and recorder of outward nature, and a censor of human nature in himself and others. Long before September, 1839, when he had reached the age of two-and-twenty, he had accustomed himself to observe closely all the phenomena of earth and sky, and had been a considerable traveller. In 1836 he had gone with his father to New York, selling their wares, which at that time were pencils. He had probably been on a visit to his cousins in Bangor, before that journey which he made in May, 1838, in quest of a school; and the towns about Concord were familiar to him from his excursions with his gun in quest of game. He began to note for description poetic aspects of the landscape as early as 1835, and a few such passages have been preserved. Regular journalizing, on the scale followed by him in after years, began in 1837, and the index pre-

served from this lost volume shows that it was in the same fashion of unseparated mingling of description with reflection, which surprises the reader of existing volumes of the Journal. His mode of recording these remarks and reflections is different from the common practice among those who keep journals, and indicates a purpose which he methodically followed in all his after life. What this practice was, and the motive for it, were curiously noted by Channing, whose statement is here copied. It was not made until some years after the river voyage; but must have been much the same from 1837 until the Minnesota journey; after which his health did not allow him to pursue this elaborate system of notes, copies, records, and indexing. Channing says: —

His habit was to go abroad a portion of each day, to fields or woods or the Concord River. "I go out," he said, "to see what I have caught in my traps, which I set for facts." He looked to fabricate an epitome of creation, and give us a homeopathy of Nature. . . . He used the afternoon for walking, and usually set forth about 2.30, returning at 5.30; this three hours was the average length of his walk. In these walks his pockets must accommodate his notebook and spy-glass. The notebook was a cover for some folded papers, on which he took his out-of-door notes; this was never omitted,

rain or shine. He acquired great skill in conveying by a few lines or strokes a long story, which in his written Journal might occupy pages. Into the notebook must go all measurements with the footrule which he always carried, or the surveyor's tape; also all observations with his spy-glass, — an invariable companion; all conditions of plants, spring, summer and fall; the depth of snows, the strangeness of skies, — all went down. To his memory he never trusted for a fact, but to the paper and the pencil. I have seen bits of this notebook, but never recognized any word in it; and I have read its expansion in the Journal to many pages, of that which occupied him but five minutes to write in the field. "Have you written up your notes in your Journal?" was one of his questions. . . . He brought home from his walks objects of all kinds, — pieces of wood or stone, lichens, seeds, nuts, apples, or whatever he had found; for he was a vigorous collector.

The idea he conceived was, that he might, upon a small territory like Concord, construct a chart or calendar of the phenomena of the seasons in their order, and give their general average for the year. Nothing should be taken on hearsay. How vast a work this is! he could only have completed some portion of it in a long lifetime. His calendar embraced cold and heat, rain and snow, ice and water; he had his gauges on the river, which he consulted, winter and summer; he knew the temperature of all the springs in town; he measured the snows when remarkable. I never heard him complain that the plants were too many, the hours too long. . . . Insects were fascinating,

from the first gray little moth, the *Perla*, born in February's deceitful glare, to the last luxuriating *Vanessa antiope*, that gorgeous purple-velvet butterfly of November. Hornets, wasps, bees and spiders and their several nests, he carefully attended. Hawks, ducks, sparrows, thrushes and migrating warblers, in all their variety, he carefully perused with his field-glass. He "named all the birds without a gun," — a weapon he never used in mature years. He neither killed nor imprisoned any animal, unless driven by acute needs. He brought home a flying-squirrel, to study its mode of flight; but quickly carried it back to the wood. His study (a place in the garret) held its dry miscellany of botanical specimens, its corner of canes, its cases of eggs and lichens, and a weight of Indian arrow-heads and hatchets, — besides a store of nuts, of which he was as fond as squirrels are.

The excursion which gave occasion for his first book, the "Week," was suggested by the boat which he and his brother built in the spring of 1839, and the tent which they added for voyages of more than one day. It extended from Concord to the top of Mount Washington, and was the first of those mountain visits which were afterward a part of his summer life. Occasionally he visited Monadnoc earlier or later in the year; and he spent more hours on that mountain than on any other. Wachusett, a nearer mountain,

he several times visited; and he had tried his hand at descriptions of nature in the "Dial" and other magazines, before he could get his first book printed — which was at his own expense in 1849. It omitted many of the details of the fortnight whose hours by day and night it occupied; but he wove into its earlier substance the diary of tours he had afterwards taken to the Uncanoonucs, to Greylock, to the Catskills, and to Monadnoc. He first appeared as an author in print, in the "Dial" (its first number, July, 1840), in a poem entitled "Sympathy," which professed to lament a "gentle boy," but did in fact celebrate, in unaccustomed fashion, the sister of one of his pupils in the school of the two brothers. Other verses and prose essays followed; but that rhapsody on courage, soldiership, and music, which I printed in 1902, as "The Service," did not get admission to the "Dial," because Margaret Fuller did not think it quite good enough. After giving a general view of the thirteen days' tour, condensed by him into a week of seven days, I give some omitted portions of the Journal (long since destroyed) from which about half the volume was taken, with modifications and insertions, — Thoreau's constant habit, when preparing a book for the press.

The Actual Tour of September, 1839

On Saturday, August 31, the new boat was freighted with the tent, blankets, instruments of precision, food, literature, etc., thought to be needful or convenient for the brothers; and it dropped down the Sudbury to its junction with the Assabet, constituting the larger stream known as Concord River; and it passed under the Red Bridge, and the Battle-Ground Bridge, gliding by the Parsonage, not yet known as the "Old Manse," under the new North Bridge, through the meadows at the foot of Ponkawtassett, and onward toward Bedford, Billerica, and Lowell. By September 1 the brothers were enjoying Sunday quiet on the broad stream of the Merrimac, and the journalizing had begun. Monday morning they were rowing their boat through an early fog between Dunstable and Nashua in New Hampshire, "advancing farther into the country and into the day, — the slight bustle and activity of Monday being added to the Sundayness of Nature." Henry says: —

Occasionally one of us would run along the shore for a change; examining the country and visiting the nearest farm-houses; while the other followed the windings of the river alone, with a view of meeting his companion

at some distant point, and hearing the report of each other's adventures; — how the farmer praised the coolness of his well, and his wife offered the stranger a draught of milk. For though the country was so new, and the inhabitants unobserved and unexplored by us (shut in between steep banks, that still and sunny day), we did not have to travel far to find where men inhabited like wild bees, and had sunk wells in the loose sand and loam of the Merrimac. All that is told of mankind, — of the inhabitants of the Upper Nile, and the Sunderbunds, and of Timbuctoo and the Orinoko, is experience there. And there have lived original and free-thinking men, perhaps, — those men of whom we read in the history of New Hampshire. While we were engaged in these reflections, and thought ourselves the only navigators of these waters, suddenly a canal-boat, like some huge river-horse, with its large sail set, glided round a point before us, and changed the scene in an instant. And then another and another glided into sight, and we found ourselves once more in the current of commerce. . . . Then we turned our prow ashore, to spend the remainder of the day under the oaks of a retired pasture, sloping to the water's edge, and bordered with hazel, in the town of Hudson.

This was Monday night, September 2. Tuesday night they were at Coos Falls in the New Hampshire town of Bedford, chatting with some masons, whom they saw again Wednesday morning, as they were striking their tent, — a passage

omitted from the volume, but showing how they camped: —

We supposed we had selected a retired part of the shore; but we discovered this morning that we had pitched our tent directly in the path of the masons, whom we had seen crossing the Merrimac in their boat the evening before. And now, going to their work again, they came upon us as we were rolling up our tent; and tarried to examine our furniture and handle our guns, which were leaning against a tree. This was the first and only time that we were observed in our camping-ground by any one, — though our white tent on an eminence must have been a conspicuous object. So much room is there still in Nature, and so easy would it be to travel the length and breadth of the land without the knowledge of its inhabitants. Thus without skulking, far from the dust and din of travel, we had beheld the country at our leisure, by daylight and by night, — secure of the best introduction to Nature. All other roads intrude and bring the traveller to a stand; but the river has stolen into the scenery it traverses without intrusion, — watering and adorning it; and is as free to come and go as the zephyr.

That day, September 4, they sped on upstream, past Manchester, toward Hooksett, and in sight of the Pinnacle, a picturesque mountain-spur; and passed the night near where they left their boat for a week, while they pushed on by land to Concord, Sanbornton, and the White Moun-

tains. The description of this last stretch of their voyage up shows clearly the completeness of their preparation for such a tour: —

We presently came upon several canal-boats, at intervals of a quarter-mile, standing up to Hooksett with a light breeze; and one by one they disappeared round a point above. With their broad sails set, they moved slowly up the stream in the sluggish and fitful breeze, as if impelled by some mysterious counter-current, like antediluvian birds; a grand motion, slow and steady. One steersman offered to take us in tow, but when he came alongside we found that he intended to take us on board, boat and all. As we were too heavy to be lifted aboard, we left him and proceeded up the stream half a mile, to the shade of some maples, to spend our noon. In half an hour several boats passed up the river, and among them the boat mentioned, keeping the middle of the stream with a fair wind. The steersman called out ironically that if we would come alongside he would take us in tow. We made no haste to give chase till they were a quarter-mile ahead. Then, with all our sails set, and plying our four oars, we shot swiftly up the stream, and, one after the other, we overtook them. As we glided under the side of our acquaintances, we quietly promised, if they would throw us a rope, to take *them* in tow. Thus we gradually overhauled each boat in succession, until we had the river to ourselves again.

This shows they had more than one sail, and

were the fastest boat on the river. Thursday proved rainy, and they set out on foot for Plymouth, where dwelt their friend N. P. Rogers, an anti-slavery lecturer and editor, on whom they called, and then walked on through Holderness, Lincoln, Franconia, and Bethlehem, to the Crawford Notch and the summit of Mount Washington; which Thoreau, like Emerson, calls Agiocochook. In a fragmentary diary which I have seen, Henry says that they left their boat at Hooksett, Thursday, September 5, walked to Concord, New Hampshire, that night; on the 6th took the stage-coach for Plymouth, and thence on foot to Tilton's Tavern in Thornton. He notes that "the mountain scenery begins on Sanbornton Square." On the 7th they were at the Franconia Notch, gazing on the "Old Man of the Mountain," — Hawthorne's "Great Stone Face," — and on the 8th in Tom Crawford's Tavern at the Great Notch; from which they made excursions down the Notch and in other directions. They seem to have rested on Sunday, and did not ascend the highest peak until Tuesday, September 10; and they returned by stage-coach from North Conway, and were at Hooksett, Thursday night, September 12, after a week's absence from their boat, which they

found in good condition. Miss Prudence Ward, writing to her brother, September 30, said: —

> The young gentlemen returned from their expedition to the White Mountains in less than a fortnight, having gone nearly to Concord, New Hampshire, in their boat; from there they travelled most of the way on foot, returning to their boat by stage. Their return was very expeditious, — coming in the boat fifty miles the last day (Friday, September 13). Having so much of his vacation left, John thought he would visit his sisters at Roxbury; and also go to Scituate. We knew not for certain whether Mr. Sewall would be gone. It seems he had set off that very day. John enjoyed himself, however, very well with Ellen and the boys. Caroline told you of the very pleasant visit we had from Ellen; and we have also heard directly from there by John Thoreau.

A slight notice of John's visit came also from Ellen Sewall to her aunt; accompanying some flowers pressed in a pamphlet sermon, on the inside cover of which the maiden wrote, "I have enjoyed Mr. John's visit exceedingly, though sorry that father and mother were not at home." Before the river voyage, Henry had probably learned that his brother was preferred to himself in that quarter; for his poem in the "Dial" was dated June 24, 1839. Other verses of the period

would seem to have had this maiden in view — particularly —

The Breeze's Invitation

Like two careless swifts let's sail,
(Zephyrus shall think for me,)
Over hill and over dale,
Riding on the easy gale,
We will scan the earth and sea.

Yonder see that willow tree,
Winnowing the buxom air!
You a gnat and I a bee,
With our merry minstrelsy
We will make a concert there.

One green leaf shall be our screen
Till the sun doth go to bed;
I the king and you the queen
Of that peaceful little green,
Without any subject's aid.

To our music Time shall linger,
And Earth open wide her ear;
Nor shall any need to tarry,
To immortal verse to marry
Such sweet music as he'll hear.

Like much of Thoreau's verse, this is oracular or mystical; and such was often his prose when Music was his theme. Thus, in a long passage from the Journal of the river voyage, only a small part of which appeared in the "Week," I find this: —

Music at Night (*September 2, 1839*)

I shall not soon forget the sounds which we heard as we were falling asleep this night on the banks of the Merrimac. Far into the night we heard some tyro beating a drum incessantly, in preparation for a country muster in Candia, as we learned, and we thought of the line, —

"When the drum beat at dead of night."

The very firmament echoed his beat, and we could have answered him that it would be answered, and the forces be mustered. Fear not, thou drummer of the night, we too will be there! And still he drummed on alone in the silence and the dark. This stray sound from a far-off sphere came to our ears from time to time, to remind us of those fabulous Arabian notes we had almost forgotten. It was as if our shoulders jogged the stars.

Occasionally we hear a remote sound from a distant sphere, with so unprejudiced a sense for the sweet and significant, that we seem for the first time to have heard at all; and then the cheapest sound has a larger meaning and a wider undulation than we know. When we hear any musical sound in Nature, it is as if it were a bell ringing; we feel that we are not belated, but in season wholly, and enjoy a pensive and leisure hour.

What a fine and beautiful communication is Music, from age to age, of the fairest and noblest thoughts, — the aspirations of ancient men preserved, — even such as were never communicated by speech! It is the flower of language, — thought colored and curved,

tinged and wreathed, — fluent and flexible: its crystal fountain tinged with the sun's rays, and its purling ripples reflecting the green grass and the red clouds. It teaches us again and again to trust the remotest and finest as the divinest instinct; and it makes a dream our only real experience.

> Each more melodious note I hear
> Brings this reproach to me, —
> That I alone afford the ear,
> Who would the music be.

The brave man is the sole patron of music: he recognizes it for his mother-tongue, — a more mellifluous and articulate language than words; in comparison with which, speech is recent and temporary. His language must have the same majestic movement and cadence that philosophy assigns to the heavenly bodies. The steady flux of his thought constitutes time in music. The universe falls in and keeps pace with it, — which before proceeded singly and discordant.

Hence are Poetry and Song. When Bravery first grew afraid and went to war, it took Music along with it. The soul is still delighted to hear the echo of its own voice. It was the dim sentiment of a noble friendship for the purest soul the world has seen, that gave to Europe a crusading era. If the soldier marches to the sack of a town, he must be preceded by drum and trumpet, to identify his cause with the accordant universe.

There is as much music in the world as virtue. In a world of peace and love music would be the universal language; and men would greet each other in the fields

in such accents as a Beethoven now utters at rare intervals, from a distance. All things obey music as they obey virtue; it is the herald of virtue; it is God's voice.

As polishing brings out the vein in marble and the grain in wood, so music brings out what of heroic lurks anywhere. It is either a sedative or a tonic to the soul.

A sudden burst from a horn startles us, as if one had rashly provoked a wild beast; he dares wake the echoes which he cannot put to rest. The sound of a bugle in the stillness of the night sends forth its voice to the farthest stars. Instantly it finds its sounding-board in the heavens. A man's life should be a stately march to an unheard music; and when to his fellows it may seem irregular and inharmonious, he may be stepping to a livelier measure, which only his nicer ear can detect. . . . Let not the faithful sorrow, that he has no ear for the more fickle and subtile harmonies of creation, if he be awake to the slower measure of virtue and truth. If his pulse does not beat in unison with the musician's quips and turns, it may accord with the pulse-beat of the ages.

These are not the vagaries of imagination, but the versatile thoughts of a sensitive and musical youth, who seeks to show his subtile fancies in all their variety. Such refined speculations alternate, in these early Journals, with the plainest practical observations, and cool statements of everyday fact, concerning the American Indian,

the passenger pigeon, or the wood duck or wild goose. In closing this voyage in the colder atmosphere of mid-September, the two brothers note with interest the scenes they beheld with keen curiosity as they toiled upstream with sail and oar, in a summer climate.

Hooksett, Thursday, Sept. 12, 1839. Finding our boat safe in its harbor under the Uncannunuc Mountain, with a fair wind and the current in our favor, we commenced our return voyage at noon; sitting at our ease and conversing, or in silence watching for the end of each reach in the river, as a bend concealed it from view. As the season was now farther advanced, the wind blew steadily from the north, and we were enabled to lie upon our oars, without much loss of time, when it pleased us. By this time we had become known as a strange craft upon the river, and had acquired the nickname of the "Revenue Cutter." With this propitious breeze we soon reached the Falls of Amoskeag, and recognized, as we passed rapidly by, many a fair bank and islet upon which our thoughts had rested on the upward passage. Without any design or effort of ours, the ripples curled away in the wake of our boat, like ringlets from the head of a child; while we went serenely on our way. We passed in broad daylight the scene of our night's encampment at Coos Falls, and at last pitched our camp on the west bank, in the northern part of Merrimac, opposite to the large island on which we had spent our noon, on our way up the river.

The next morning at five o'clock they had still fifty miles to run before the wind, which had shifted to northwest and was blowing coldly autumnal.

So they sped along past all their camping-places, until they were passed through the locks at Cromwell's Falls in Lowell, about noon, and soon launched on the adverse but gentle current of the Concord, or Musketaquid. Up this they pressed through the meadows, with oar and sail, until, late in the evening of September 13, the boat was "grating against the bulrushes of its native port," somewhere near the mouth of the Mill Brook. They drew it up and fastened it by its chain to the wild apple tree, where it was easily reached from the Parkman house, to which they hastened home. They had successfully achieved an adventure as widely known now as Jason's voyage in his Argo; and their village is now more famous than Jason's Iolchos.

When Hawthorne came, three years later, to bring his bride to the Old Manse, for a few years, he desired a boat for his excursions, and the death of John Thoreau, early in 1842, had made this boat a cause of grief to Henry. In the spring of 1843 he made it over to Hawthorne and Channing, who had then come to live and die in Con-

cord; and he became the most intimate friend of these two men of kindred genius.

At this point of time we are fortunate in having a sketch of Thoreau's physical, intellectual, and moral nature, drawn by one of his neighbors in Concord, singularly gifted in fathoming the souls of men, and not too favorable in his verdicts — Hawthorne himself. After the close of their school, and before his brother's death, Thoreau had gone, by invitation of Emerson, to live in his family and assist him in the care of his garden and woodlands, with some care also of the publication of the "Dial," which had by 1841 fallen mainly upon Emerson, assisted by several of his friends. Thoreau as gardener and mechanic had achieved a reputation, and it was he, most likely, with some aid from George Bradford (the brother of Mrs. Ripley, whose husband leased the Manse to Hawthorne), who put the garden of the old parsonage into readiness for Mrs. Hawthorne, when she should come to it as a bride in July, 1842. Accordingly, Thoreau was one of the first of the new neighbors of the Hawthornes to dine with them (August 31, 1842). This visit drew out this entry in Hawthorne's notebook: —

Mr. Thoreau is a singular character; a young man with much of wild, original Nature still remaining in

him; and so far as he is sophisticated, it is in a way and method of his own. He is as ugly as sin; long-nosed, queer-mouthed, and with uncouth and somewhat rustic manners, — though courteous, — corresponding with such an exterior. But his ugliness is of an honest and agreeable fashion, and becomes him much better than beauty.

He was educated at Cambridge, and formerly kept a school in this town; but for two or three years back he has repudiated all regular means of getting a living, and seems inclined to lead a sort of Indian life. He has been for some time an inmate of Mr. Emerson's family, and in requital he labors in the garden, and performs such other offices as may suit him: being entertained by Mr. Emerson for the sake of what true manhood may be in him.

He is a keen and delicate observer of Nature, — a *genuine* observer, which I suspect is almost as rare a character as even an original poet. And Nature, in return for his love, seems to adopt him as her especial child; and shows him secrets which few others are allowed to witness. He is familiar with beast, fish, fowl and reptile, and has strange stories to tell of adventures and friendly passages with these lower brethren of mortality. Herb and flower, likewise, wherever they grow, whether in garden or wildwood, are his familiar friends. He is on intimate terms with the clouds also, and can tell the portents of storms. He has a great regard for the memory of the Indian tribes, whose wild life would have suited him so well; and, strange to say, he seldom walks over a plowed field without picking

up an arrow-point, spearhead, or other relic of the red man. With all this he has more than a tincture of literature; a deep and true taste for poetry, especially for the elder poets; and he is a good writer. At least he has written a good article, — a rambling disquisition on Natural History, in the last "Dial," which, he says, was chiefly made up from journals of his own observations. Methinks this article gives a very fair image of mind and character, — so true, so innate and literal in observation, — yet giving the spirit as well as the letter of what he sees; even as a lake reflects its wooded banks, showing every leaf, — yet giving the wild beauty of the whole scene. There is a basis of good sense and moral truth, too, which is a reflection of his character.

Considering how little Thoreau had published at this time, and that Hawthorne had hardly heard of him before, this is a singularly apt verdict. Six months later, with that perception of repulsions which Hawthorne so keenly had, he adds in his notebook — what time had perhaps already justified: —

Mr. Emerson seems to have suffered some inconvenience from his experience of Mr. Thoreau as an inmate. It may well be that such a sturdy, uncompromising person is fitter to meet occasionally in the open air than to have as a permanent guest at table and fireside.

A few years after this, when Charles Malloy, a young Emersonian from Limerick, in Maine, had come up to Boston to hear Emerson lecture, and to borrow his copy of the old English version of the Bhagavat Ghita, he had a long talk with the Concord poet, in which he asked, with some curiosity, about Thoreau, whose papers in the "Dial" he had seen. Emerson "spoke of him kindly, as if he liked him"; but added: —

> He is a man of incorruptible integrity, and of great ability and industry; and we shall yet hear much more of him. But he affects manners rather brusque, does not think it worth while to use the cheap service of courtesy; is pugnacious about trifles; likes to contradict, likes to say No, and to be on the other side. You cannot always tell what will please him. He was ill, and I sent him a bottle of wine, which I doubt if he ever tasted. I regret these oddities. He needs to fall in love, to sweeten him and straighten him.

"A pleasant medicine, I thought" reflected Malloy, "but it does n't always cure."

Before the summer of 1842, when Hawthorne's verdict was rendered, it had become evident to a few others, as well as to himself, that Thoreau's vocation was to literature rather than to science or to a professorship. In their school, while Henry was the more exact and widely read scholar,

John was the affable and persuasive schoolmaster. John's withdrawal by reason of health in 1841 convinced Henry that teaching was for him a means rather than an end; a more active life suited him better, and he chose one that did not involve him so closely in those social engagements which he chose to meet on his own terms. Mr. Emerson's offer of a home met these wishes seasonably; and the "Dial," for which he now wrote often, and aided in editing, gave him a means of publishing, although no pecuniary profit. He felt no distaste or disgust at manual toil, to which he had been bred as well as to learning. In a letter to Horace Greeley, with whom he soon became intimate, Henry some years later thus declared himself on this point:—

> Scholars are apt to think themselves privileged to complain, as if their lot was a particularly hard one. How much we have heard of knowledge under difficulties — of poets starving in garrets, depending on the patronage of the wealthy, and finally dying mad! It is time that men sang another song. There is no reason why the scholar, who professes to be a little wiser than the mass of men, should not do his work in the dirt occasionally; and by means of his superior wisdom make much less suffice for him. A wise man will not be unfortunate, — how then would you know but that he was a fool?

He was always scrupulous about receiving favors without returning an equivalent, and it was his habit to pay board at his father's house. Among the many Thoreau manuscripts that have accumulated with me in the half-century that I have been one of his biographers, I found this calculation, entered on the back of one of his poems, showing how much he owed and paid for board and borrowings, during the winter months of 1840–41, while he was still teaching in Academy Lane, and a little before he went to live at Mr. Emerson's: —

	Dec. 8, 1840, Owe Father	$41.73
	" 17, Paid,	5.00
Settled up to March 22, 1841.	Jan. 1, 1841, Paid,	15.00
	Feb. 2, 1841, Borrowed	1.35
	" 8, 1841, Paid,	10.00

To use the back of a poem for this entry shows how frugal of paper he was, while making such constant and repeated use of it as he did in journalizing; and still more in transcribing and revising for the printer, making two or three drafts of many passages — as, for instance, in these entries for the "Week."

CHAPTER VII

THOREAU IN LITERATURE

The school survived the river voyage more than a year and a half — from September 15, 1839, to April 1, 1841. It closed, as already mentioned, because of the failing health of John. Among the later pupils was Senator Hoar, who read Greek with Henry, and afterwards with Mrs. Ripley, before entering Harvard in 1842. In his Autobiography he speaks very pleasantly of Henry, as his brother Edward and his sister Elizabeth always did. But their mother, the youngest daughter of Roger Sherman, with something of her father's overplus of the practical, found fault with Henry for his oddities; and about this time said, "Henry talks about Nature just as if she had been born and brought up in Concord." Emerson never complained of that, but even he was a severe critic of Thoreau's verse, as will presently appear. In his own opinion, Thoreau's "first printed paper of consequence" was that on Persius, which came out in the "Dial" and was written early in 1840; but many of the best parts of the "Week" and of "Walden" appear in their

original form in the two earliest Journals, the "Red Book" from October 22, 1837, to June 11, 1840, and one of 396 pages that immediately followed it. From the first "The Service" was almost entirely made up; and in it were found these passages, of the same period:—

We must live on the stretch, retiring to our rest like soldiers on the eve of a battle, looking forward with ardor to the strenuous sortie of the morrow. To the brave soldier the rust and leisure of peace are harder than the fatigues of war. As our bodies court physical encounters, and languish in the mild and even climate of the tropics, so our souls thrive best on unrest and discontent. The soul is a sterner master than any King Frederick; for a true bravery would subject our bodies to rougher usage than even a grenadier could withstand. We too are dwellers within the purlieus of the camp. When the sun breaks through the morning mist, I seem to hear the din of war louder than when his chariot thundered on the plain of Troy. The thin folds of vapor, spread like gauze over the woods, form extended lawns whereon high tournament is held: —

"Before each van
Prick forth the aery knights and couch their spears,
Till thickest legions close."

Of such sort, then, be our Crusade; which, while it inclines chiefly to the hearty good will and activity of war, rather than to the insincerity and sloth of peace, will set an example to both of calmness and energy; — as unconcerned for victory as careless of defeat, — not

seeking to lengthen our term of service, nor to cut it short by a reprieve, — but earnestly applying ourselves to the campaign before us. Nor let our warfare be a boorish and uncourteous one; but let a higher courtesy attend its higher chivalry, — though not to the slackening of its rougher duties and severer discipline. So our camp may be a palæstra, wherein the dormant energies and affections of men may tug and wrestle; not to their discomfiture, but to their mutual exercise and development.

What were Godfrey and Gonsalvo unless we breathe a life into them? and enacted their exploits as a prelude to our own? The Past is the canvas on which our idea is painted, —

"The dim prospectus of our future field."

We are dreaming of what we are to do. Methinks I hear the clarion sound, and the clang of corslet and buckler, from many a silent hamlet of the Soul. The signal gun has long since sounded, and we are not yet on our posts. Let us make such haste as the morning, and such delay as the evening.

This was the young Thoreau's theory of spiritual war and peace, framed with little relation to the commonplace details of practical life, but an idealist's chart for great-circle sailing among the isles and mainlands of Philosophy, wherein Thoreau's guidebook just then was Emerson's treatise entitled "Nature." Under a new heading, he went on in his "Service" to describe —

The Qualities of the Recruit

Spes sibi quisque. (Each one his own hope.) VIRGIL.

The brave man is the elder son of creation, who has stept buoyantly into his inheritance; while the younger, who is the coward, waiteth patiently till he decease. He rides as wide of the Earth's gravity as a star; and by yielding incessantly to all the impulses of the Soul, is constantly drawn upward, and becomes a fixed star. His bravery deals not so much in resolute action as in healthy and assured rest; its palmy state is a staying at home and compelling alliance in all directions. The brave man braves nothing, nor knows he of his bravery. He is that sixth champion against Thebes,[1] whom, when the proud devices of the rest have been recorded, Æschylus describes as

> "Bearing a full-orbed shield of solid brass,
> But there was no device upon its circle:
> For to be just, not seem so, is his wish."

All omens are good to the brave man; the spilling of salt, the standing-up of a fork portend good to him; for he feels the simplest law of Nature to be the warrant of universal innocence. All her phenomena consent with him. His breath is the moving air, his mood is the Seasons. Can he live in the midst of Nature and not be as serene as she? The greatness of the hero is not stretched; he does not stand on tiptoe, but on the

[1] This is from the "Seven against Thebes," which Thoreau not only read in college, but afterwards made of it a literal version, which has never been printed. His like translation of the "Prometheus Bound" is printed. For his wide readings in Greek, Latin, and other tongues, see pp. 260, 261.

soles of his feet. He is not acting as if he were tall; his nerves are unstrained; he reposes by as many points as a sick man on his couch. How many wait for health and warm weather to be heroic and noble! Not he who procures a substitute to go to Florida,[1] is thus exempt from the service; he is to gather his laurels in another field.

The religion we now have is very laic; as little does it creep into the sermon of the preacher as does poetry into the lecture of the Professor. The life which will best bear to be considered may be not only without religion, but even without morality. Occasionally we rise above the necessity of virtue, into an unchangeable morning light, in which we have not to choose, (as in a dilemma) between right and wrong; but may live right on, and breathe the circumambient air. This is the very vitality of life; no moral discourse has ever aimed so high as this level. The preacher is silent about it, and silent must ever be; for he who knows it will not preach. For the most part the best man's spirit makes a fearful sprite to haunt his tomb. The ghost of a priest is no better than that of a highwayman. It is pleasant even to hear of one whose life has been such that, after death, his grave blesses the region round-about, — who has profaned or tabooed no place by being buried in it.

[1] The Florida War was an ignoble campaign, carried on by our small army under Jackson and Van Buren, against the Seminole Indians and the runaway slaves of Georgia and Carolina, whom the Indians protected. It went on for years, but ended about 1840. In that period several young men went to the army from West Point, to which they were sent as pupils from Concord.

I like those men who do their Maker the compliment not to fear Him; who grow bolder as great crises approach; who sit, even in the presence of the gods, and shrink not: and are timid, if it must be so, in the presence of mean men; who literally neither fear God nor the Devil, but love and respect the one while they hate the other.

How all the world takes care of a great man's reputation but himself! Pity that man who "has a character to support," — it is worse than a very large family. We seem to linger in manhood but to tell the dreams of our childhood; and they vanish out of memory ere we have learned their language. When, then, shall we execute them? Alas! now is never the time.

The moral aspect of the universe is, after all, but a jaundice imported into it by the degeneracy of man. I like the frankness of my neighbor, who said that his hill-farm was "poor stuff, — just fit to hold this world together," — and whom no religious scruples could induce to retract what he had said. No doubt the lean soil had sharpened his wits; and he saw the heavens at a lesser angle from the hill than from the plain.[1] The gods would not be pleased, though a man were dis-

[1] This may have been the owner of the "Hollowell Farm," a small demesne on the ridge overlooking the Musketaquid, near the "caterpillar bridge" leading toward Nine-Acre Corner, not far from the foot of Fairhaven Hill, near the summit of which are the "Cliffs," much visited by Emerson in his afternoon walks. Although Thoreau had much to say in reproach of the self-seeking farmers of Concord, he was on good terms with the small farmers and farm laborers, whom he daily met.

satisfied with their gifts, if he clearly demanded greater. It would be worth while to remember, daily, that we are to make great demands on Heaven and on ourselves.

After contemplating a nobler life than usual, the question arises, What are we to do? The relation or sight of any noble life unfits us for all common work. It subsides into our very bones, and excites us to muscular exertion; we are stronger in the knees. The past then seems but a dim prospective of our future field.[1] We feel our future deeds bestir themselves within us, and move grandly to a consummation, — as ships go down the Thames. Alas! is all to be in vain? What we really need to know is very simple. The course of our lives lies plain before us, as that river's valley; we need only know the highland from the main, — on this side the mountains, and on that the sea. We have but to try; really nothing stands in the way to success, — everything in the way to failure. In the least swing of the arm, in indignant thought, in stern content, we conquer our foes.

It is astonishing how fatal is every step, — even a step forward. It seems a miracle that we ever take another, — so rigid and unyielding do our muscles instantly become. When we are wisest, we are the greatest bigots. We do not stand still for a moment, but a crust forms over us, like ice on still water. We do not believe that we shall, even in a serener and wiser hour, ever see ourselves: we are never visionary enough to be prepared for what the next hour may bring forth.

[1] A verse, repeated in prose from p. 244.

In these gleanings from the earlier Journals, long since destroyed, we see comparatively little of that intimacy with outward nature which makes the charm of the only two finished books that Thoreau compiled in his lifetime from the Journals while they existed. It was not until after leaving college that he had that continuous intimacy by day and by night which appears in his mature writings. His college course had been studiously prepared for in the public schools of Concord and its Academy, the teachers of which were apt to be either youths in Harvard College, or recent graduates; and the course of study was strenuous. Moreover, the Thoreau family was hard-working; their pencil industry employed both the father and the sons until they could be better employed in more intellectual tasks. Hence there was the less leisure for the study of nature.

What we suppose to be the earliest sample of Thoreau's verse that has been preserved, is a ballad, written in his college period, and perhaps the only ballad he ever attempted. It savors both of Tasso and of Mrs. Hemans, whose poems were even more popular in America than in England; was never offered for printing anywhere, but was cherished by some aunt or cousin, and remained, like much of his later verse, in possession of the

Thatcher family at Bangor, where Mr. Bixby, an unwearied Thoreau collector, found it in 1906. In Thoreau's "Service" appear traces of his early interest in the Crusades, and the contests between Christian and Moor in Spain; some of which will be quoted hereafter. The following ballad celebrates Tasso's hero —

Godfrey of Boulogne [1]

The moon hung low o'er Provence vales,
'T was night upon the sea;
Fair France was wooed by Afric gales,
And paid in minstrelsy.
Along the Rhone there moves a band,
Their banner to the breeze,
Of mail-clad men with iron hand,
And steel on breast and knees.
The herdsman following his droves
Far in the night alone,
Read faintly through the olive groves, —
'T was Godfrey of Boulogne.

The mist still slumbered on the heights,
The glaciers lay in shade,
The stars withdrew their faded lights,
The moon went down the glade.

[1] The plot of this ballad is good, — a series of pictures at all seasons of the day, with appropriate indications of the hour, — and the Crusaders' army hastening on to rescue the Holy Sepulchre. Nor is the manner bad.

Proud Jura saw the day from far,
And showed it to the plain;
She heard the din of coming war,
But told it not again:
The goatherd seated on the rocks,
Dreaming of battles none,
Was wakened by his startled flocks, —
'T was Godfrey of Boulogne.

Night hung upon the Danube's stream,
Deep midnight on the vales,
Along the shore no beacons gleam,
No sound is on the gales.
The Turkish lord has banished care,
The harem sleeps profound,
Save one fair Georgian sitting there
Upon the Turkish ground.
The lightning flashed a transient gleam,
A glancing banner shone,
A host swept swiftly down the stream, —
'T was Godfrey of Boulogne.

'T was noon upon Byzantium,
On street and tower and sea,
On Europe's edge a warlike hum
Of gathering chivalry.
A troop went boldly through the throng
Of Ethiops, Arabs, Huns,
Jews, Greeks and Turks, — to right the wrong;
Their swords flashed thousand suns:
Their banner cleaved Byzantium's dust,
And like the sun it shone;
Upon their armor was no rust, —
'T was Godfrey of Boulogne.

Here was no implied moral, and scarcely any symbolism; it was a series of pictures vividly expressing the movement of an armed host to battle for the Lord. But in his prose, some years after this spirited verse was written, the warfare celebrated had become symbolic — a martial attitude in a civil life, mingled in its expression with fanciful and paradoxical allegations. In that rather ill-arranged essay called "The Service," which Thoreau offered for the "Dial," late in 1840, there appeared, along with magnificent pictures of morning and night, seen in the rambles of a poet, such appeals for war as these: —

Not How Many, but Where the Enemy Are

We look in vain over earth for a Roman greatness, to take up the gantlet which the heavens throw down. Idomeneus would not have demurred at the freshness of the last morning that rose to us, as unfit occasion to display his valor in; and on some such evening as this, methinks, that Grecian fleet came to anchor in the bay of Aulis. Would that it were to us the eve of a more than ten years' war, — a tithe of whose exploits and Achillean withdrawals, and godly interferences, would stock a library of Iliads.

Better that we have some of that testy spirit of knight-errantry; and (if we are so blind as to think the world is not rich enough nowadays to afford a real foe to combat) with our trusty swords and double-handed

maces, hew and mangle some unreal phantom of the brain. In the pale and shivering fogs of the morning, gathering themselves up betimes, and withdrawing sluggishly to their daylight haunts, — I see Falsehood sneaking from the full blaze of Truth; and with good relish I could do execution on their rearward ranks, with the first brand that came to hand.

We too are such puny creatures as to be put to flight by the sun, and suffer our ardor to grow cool as his increases; our own short-lived chivalry sounds a retreat with the fumes and vapors of the night; and we turn to meet mankind, with a meek face preaching peace, and such non-resistance as the chaff that rides before the whirlwind. Let not our peace be proclaimed by the rust upon our swords, or our inability to draw them; but let Peace at least have so much work on her hands as to keep those swords bright and sharp.

The very dogs that bay the moon from farmyards o' these nights, do evince more heroism than is tamely barked forth in all the civil exhortations and war-summons of the age. That day and night, which should be set down indelibly in men's hearts, must be learned from the pages of our almanack. And so the time lapses without epoch or era, and we know some half-score of mornings and evenings by tradition only. Men are a circumstance to themselves, instead of causing the Universe to stand around, the mute witness of their manhood. . . .

"Discretion is the wise man's soul," says the poet; so does his discretion give prevalence to his valor. His prudence may safely go many strides beyond the

utmost rashness of the coward; for while he observes strictly the golden mean, he seems to run through all extremes with impunity. The golden mean in ethics, as in physics, is the centre of the system, and that about which all revolves; and though to a distant and plodding planet it be the uttermost extreme, yet one day, when that planet's year is complete, it will be found central. They who are alarmed lest Virtue should so far demean herself as to be extremely good, have not yet wholly embraced her. . . .

The coward wants resolution, which the brave man can do without. He recognizes no faith, but a creed; thinking this straw, by which the coward is moored, does him good service, because his sheet anchor does not drag. In his religion the ligature, which should be muscle and sinew, is rather like that thread which the accomplices of Cylon held in their hands when they went out from the temple of Minerva; the other end being attached to the statue of the goddess. But frequently, as in their case, the thread breaks, and he is left without an asylum.

In the meanest are all the materials of manhood; only they are not rightly disposed. We say justly that the weak person is "flat," — for, like all flat substances, he does not stand in the direction of his strength, that is, on his edge. Most things are strong in one direction, — a straw longitudinally, a board in the direction of its edge, a knee transversely to its grain. But the brave man is a perfect sphere, which cannot fall on a flat side, and is equally strong every way. The grand and majestic have always somewhat

of the undulatoriness of the sphere. It is the secret of majesty in the rolling gait of the elephant, and of all grace in action and in Art. Always the line of beauty is a curve.

When with pomp a huge sphere is drawn along the streets, by the efforts of a hundred men, I seem to discover each striving to imitate its gait and keep step with it, — if possible, to swell to its own diameter. What shame then, that our lives, which might so well be the source of planetary motion, and sanction the order of the spheres, should be full of abruptness and angularity, so as not to roll nor move majestically.

There is often a sly humor in what Thoreau seriously wrote, of which here is perhaps an instance. He seems to be upholding the paradox of his friend Alcott, that the human, individual, soul has originated nature, which is gravely stated as poetic doctrine in Emerson's first book. But the illustration comes from the grotesque performance of Thoreau's Whig seniors in Concord, a month before this essay was finished, — when the village squires, with the noisy assistance of the boys, rolled a huge ball, on Bunker Hill Day, from Concord to Charlestown, as a symbol of the popular movement against President Van Buren in that presidential election of 1840. Fancy Colonel Whiting and Major Barrett, with the Brooks and Hoar families, thus engaged and chanting —

"It is the Ball a-rolling on
For Tippecanoe and Tyler too."

Young Thoreau must have seen the joke of it, and the corpulence of Major Barrett may have suggested the majestic motions of the elephants. In contrast to this grave burlesque, take this specimen of his poetic prose, from the same unequal essay:—

When my eye falls on the stupendous masses of the clouds, tossed into such irregular greatness across the cope of my sky, I feel that their grandeur is thrown away on the meanness of my employments. In vain the sun, through morning and noon, rolls defiance to Man; and as he sinks behind his cloudy fortress in the west, challenges him to equal greatness in his own career. But from his humbleness Man looks up to the domes and minarets and gilded battlements of the Eternal City, and is content to be a suburban dweller outside the walls. But true Art is not merely a sublime consolation and holiday labor, which the gods have given to sickly mortals: it is that masterpiece, a human life, wherein you might discover more than the freshness of Guido's Aurora, or the mild light of Titian's landscapes. No bald imitation, nor even rival of Nature; but rather the restored original of which she is the reflection. For such a masterpiece as this, whole galleries of Greece and Italy are a mere mixing of colors, and quarrying of marble.

Yet, as this very essay proves, Thoreau did

not undervalue Greece, and in some lines written not much later he said:—

> "I thank the gods for Greece,
> That permanent realm of peace;
> For as the rising moon, far in the night,
> Chequers the shade with her forerunning light,
> So in my darkest hour my senses seem
> To catch from her Acropolis a gleam." [1]

From Plutarch, whom he early and extensively read, as most of the Concord circle did, he drew out of its obscurity this passage:—

It was a conceit of Plutarch, — accounting for the preference given to signs observed on the left hand, — that men may have thought "things terrestrial and mortal directly over against heavenly and divine things; and do conjecture that the things which to us are on the *left* hand, the gods send down from their *right* hand."

The passage from the *Morals* is in those singular "Romika" (Roman questions, 113 in number) which Plutarch tried to answer. This one is, "Why omens that are called *sinister* in taking auspices are reckoned favorable?" He answers, "Perhaps 't was because men think that earthly and mortal things lie opposite to heavenly and

[1] These lines were first printed from a copy given me by Sophia soon after Henry died.

divine things; and thus conjecture that the gods send forth from their right hands what to us is on the left hand."

The citation shows with what thoroughness our young philosopher read Plutarch.

Thoreau's constant habit was contrast, — an *oxymoron* in rhetoric which would scarcely have occurred to any other, and often appeared extreme to Emerson, though fond himself of what he calls "the stairway of surprise." This principle of contrast is at work in the prose passage from the manuscript of the "Winter Walk" now before me: —

> From our comfortable pillows we lend our warm sympathy to the Siberian traveller, on whose morning route the sun is rising, and in imagination frequent the encampment of the lonely fur-trader on Lake Winnipeg; and climb the Ural or the Jura, or range the Andes and the Rocky Mountains, or traverse the shaggy solitudes of the glaciers, — in our dreams hugging the furs about us. Or perhaps we have visions of Greece and Italy, the Ægean Sea and the Sicilian coast; or anticipate the coming in of Spring like a pomp, through the gate of a city.

This passage, written about 1842, shows, as do many of his college essays, how early Thoreau possessed that grace of style, that felicity in the

choice of words, for which many toil in vain. Channing, with his usual acuteness, somewhere says, "In much that Thoreau wrote there was a *philological* side; this needs to be thoughtfully considered." It was a natural result of his acquisition of many languages, and his notice of their relation one to another. But I have imputed this elegance to the mixture of French and Scottish blood in his ancestry; both those nations having, by long descent, graceful rhetoric without conscious art, far beyond the Anglo-Saxon, with all his vigor, imagination, and resource. Thoreau had the vigor of one line in his mixed pedigree and the grace of another. As he went on writing, — his chief business in life, — he brought this magic of style more and more into his pages; thus to equalize what had been at first (as with most young authors) an unequal and fitful manner of expressing profound thought. In his frequent verse, much of which he destroyed after Emerson's unfavorable criticism, this inequality and fitfulness was never quite overcome. Like Channing, who wrote much more verse, he did not seem capable of passing judgment on his own diction and rhythm in poetry. Poets by nature, the whole science of poetic diction was not revealed to them, though they had the full range of it.

Thoreau took the Plutarch passage from the old translation of Dryden's day, since revised and edited by Professor Goodwin, of Harvard, with an introduction by Emerson. How wide was his self-assigned course of reading in poetry, philosophy, and history, among the ancient classics, was revealed to me by his autograph list of such books, found among his papers of the "Dial" period, and which includes fifty authors, Greek and Latin, and a few in other languages than English. It would not be safe to say that he had read all these authors before he was thirty — that is, in 1847; but he had then certainly read and translated some of the most difficult. When I first knew him, at seven-and-thirty, he read Latin and French as readily as English; Greek without difficulty; German, Italian, and Spanish more or less; and had some knowledge of several dialects of the American Indians. Without a knowledge of Persian, Sanscrit, or Chinese, he had much acquaintance, through translations, either French or Latin, of writers in those languages, and could have competed with J. R. Lowell at the same age. He was at forty-four a much better scholar, in the classic sense, than Emerson, Channing, or Hawthorne; but as Channing outlived him by nearly thirty years, extending his

reading all that time, he was, before his death in 1901, more fully informed on most of Thoreau's subjects than his friend was in 1861, when he visited Ohio, Illinois, and Minnesota, with some journeys through Wisconsin and Michigan.

I will give the list of old authors in the Appendix; but in advance may say that among them were most of the Greek poets, whom he had read in the original; the Greek historians and orators, read either in Greek or in versions; the Fables transmitted by Babrius and Phædrus; Plato, Aristotle, Theophrastus, Plutarch, Lucian, Epictetus, in the original or translated; much ascribed to Pythagoras, Epicurus, Synesius, and the Neo-Platonists; most of the Latin poets down to Claudian, whom he quotes; Cicero, Cæsar, Sallust, Livy, Seneca, the two Plinys, Tacitus, Josephus, Boethius, the "Confessions" of St. Augustine; Stanley's quaint "History of Philosophy," and a French version of the "Morals of Confucius."

From many of these he has quoted in some of the thirty volumes in which more or less of his writings now appear.

In a very different measure from the ballad already given were other verses excluded by Emerson from the "Winter Walk" when he printed it in the "Dial." They are these:—

A Winter and Spring Scene

The willows droop,
The alders stoop,
The pheasants group
  Beneath the snow;
The fishes glide
From side to side,
In the clear tide,
  The ice below.

The ferret weeps,
The marmot sleeps,
The owlet keeps
  In his snug nook.
The rabbit leaps,
The mouse out-creeps,
The flag out-peeps
  Beside the brook.

The snowdust falls,
The otter crawls,
The partridge calls
  Far in the wood;
The traveller dreams,
The tree-ice gleams,
The blue jay screams
  In angry mood.

The apples thaw,
The ravens caw,
The squirrels gnaw
  The frozen fruit;

To their retreat
I track the feet
Of mice that eat
  The apple's root.

The axe resounds,
And bay of hounds,
And tinkling sounds
  Of wintry fame;
The hunter's horn
Awakes the dawn,
On fields forlorn,
  And frights the game.

The tinkling fair
Doth echo bear
To rabbit's lair,
  With dreadful din;
She scents the air,
And far doth fare,
Returning where
  She did begin.

The fox stands still
Upon the hill, —
Not fearing ill
  From trackless wind;
But to his foes
The still wind shows
In treacherous snows,
  His tracks behind.

Now melts the snow
  In the warm sun;

The meadows flow,
  The streamlets run.
The Spring is born,
  The wild bees bum,
  The insects hum,
  And trees drop gum,
And winter 's gone,
  And summer 's come.

The chic-a-dee
Lisps in the tree,
The winter bee
  Not fearing frost;
The small nuthatch
The bark doth scratch,
Some worm to catch
  At any cost.

The catkins green
Cast o'er the scene
A summer sheen,
  A genial glow.
  I melt, I flow,
And rippling run,
  Like melting snow
In this warm sun.

This also, like the ballad, is in a vein of verse that Thoreau seldom attempted; but it is very descriptive, and worth preserving, in spite of certain defects of rhyme and metre. Here, too, as in the ballad, there is little symbolism — all is plain and slightly grotesque fact. But in my next selec-

tion, which dates back to the river voyage of 1839, though revised since, the symbolic and oracular are the main substance of a form of verse somewhat resembling the last poem.

Our Country Neighbors

The respectable folks, —
Where dwell they?
They whisper in the oaks,
And they sigh in the hay;

Summer and winter, night and day,
Out on the meadow, there dwell they.
They drink at the brooks with the pilgrim's cup,
And with the owl and the nighthawk they sup;
They suck the breath of the morning wind,
And they make their own all the good they find.

They never die,
Nor snivel nor cry,
For they have leased Immortality.
A sound estate forever they mend, —
To every asker readily lend, —
To the ocean, wealth,
To the meadow, health,
To Time his length,
To the rocks, strength;
To the stars, light,
To the weary, night,
To the busy, day,
To the idle, play, —
And so their good cheer never ends,
For all are their debtors and all their friends.

This enigma is on a par with that concerning which Edward Watson, of Clark's Island, questioned Thoreau when he landed on that poet's domain, after starting to wade over from Duxbury at low tide, and being rescued and set on shore by Mr. Watson's handy boat. Thoreau having mentioned in "Walden" three things that he had lost and never found, Mr. Watson inquired into the meaning of that passage — to which the author evasively replied, "Have you never lost things?" Upon this the puzzled old gentleman mused thus: "A pretty answer to give a fellow." There are charades that have a varying answer — a different one for every type of guesser; and there we may leave the most obscure of Thoreau's problems, given out for others to solve. Thus in February, 1841, he wrote in his Journal: "Silence has no end; speech is but the beginning of it."

CHAPTER VIII

SYMBOLISM AND PARADOX

THE most symbolical and mystical of all Thoreau's poems, and the one from which Emerson quoted with the most satisfaction, was brought to me for publication in the "Boston Commonwealth" in the spring of 1863, and I printed it there in full, as Sophia gave it, wholly, I think, in his handwriting, and of an arrangement for which Thoreau himself must have been responsible. It had been growing into that form for years, and portions of it exist in other connections. Where it varies from the form in which Emerson printed parts of it, the variations may be Thoreau's own, or may be Emerson's emendations. I here give it as it was handed me by Sophia: —

Inspiration [1]

Whate'er we leave to God God does,
And blesses us:
The work we choose should be our own,
God lets alone.

[1] In this poem it is best to attend to the profound and inner meaning of words, — their *philological* sense, as Channing said.

If with light head erect I sing,
Though all the Muses lend their force,
From my poor love of anything, —
The verse is weak and shallow as its source.

But if with bended neck I grope,
Listening behind me for my wit,
With faith superior to hope, —
More anxious to keep back than forward it;

Making my soul accomplice there
Unto the flame my heart hath lit, —
Then will the verse forever wear;
Time cannot bend the line which God hath writ.

Always the general show of things
Floats in review before my mind,
And such true love and reverence brings,
That sometimes I forget that I am blind.

But now there comes, unsought, unseen,
Some clear, divine electuary,
And I, who had but sensual been,
Grow sensible, — and as God is, am wary.

I hearing get, who had but ears,
And sight, who had but eyes before;
I moments live, who lived but years,
And Truth discern, who knew but Learning's lore.

I hear beyond the range of sound,
I see beyond the range of sight,
New earths and skies and seas around;
And in my day the sun doth pale his light.

A clear and ancient harmony
  Pierces my soul through all its din,
As through its utmost melody, —
  Farther behind than they, — farther within.

More swift its bolt than lightning is,
  Its voice than thunder is more loud;
It doth expand my privacies
  To all, and leaves me single in the crowd.

It speaks with such authority,
  With so serene and lofty tone,
That idle Time runs gadding by,
  And leaves me with Eternity alone.

Then chiefly is my natal hour,
  And only then my prime of life;
Of Manhood's strength it is the flower, —
  'T is Peace's end, and War's beginning strife.

It comes in summer's broadest noon,
  By a grey wall, or some chance place;
Unseasoning Time, insulting June, —
  Vexing the day with its presuming face.

Such fragrance round my couch it makes,
  More rich than are Arabian drugs,
That my soul scents its life, and wakes
  The body up beneath its perfumed rugs.

Such is the Muse, — the heavenly maid,
  The star that guides our mortal course;
Which shows where Life's true kernel 's laid,
  Its wheat's fine flour, and its undying force.

She with one breath attunes the spheres,
And also my poor human heart;
With one impulse propels the years
Around, — and gives my throbbing pulse its start.

I will not doubt, forever more,
Nor falter from a steadfast faith;
For though the System be turned o'er,
God takes not back the word which once he saith.

I will then trust the love untold,
Which not my worth nor want hath bought,
Which wooed me young, and woos me old,
And to this evening hath me brought.

My memory I'll educate
To know the one historic truth;
Remembering to the latest date
The only true and sole immortal youth.

Be but Thy inspiration given, —
No matter through what danger sought, —
I'll fathom Hell, or climb to Heaven, —
And yet esteem that cheap which Love hath bought.

Fame cannot tempt the bard
Who's famous with his God,
Nor laurel him reward
Who hath his Maker's nod.

Now Emerson's abridgment of this confession of faith is doubtless a finer poem than this longer, irregular version; but I believe this has the merit

that we find in Herbert and Donne, of the quaintness that distinguishes so many mystics. There is a prayer of Thoreau's which Emerson introduced in a brief essay on "Prayers" in the "Dial," and only known to be Thoreau's after his death, twenty years later, though often quoted: —

> Great God! I ask thee for no meaner pelf
> Than that I may not disappoint myself:
> That in my action I may soar as high
> As I can now discern with this clear eye;
>
> And next in value, which thy kindness lends,
> That I may greatly disappoint my friends;
> Howe'er they think or hope that it may be,
> They may not dream how Thou 'st distinguished me;
>
> That my weak hand may equal my firm faith,
> And my life practice more than my tongue saith;
> That my low conduct may not show,
> Nor my relenting lines,
> That I Thy purpose did not know,
> Or overrated Thy designs.

It was this mystical side of his nature (on another side so practical in its endowment) which gave him an early familiarity with the Bhagavat Ghita and other books of Oriental devotion. Emerson showed him the way, and Alcott encouraged this tendency; but Thoreau went a little farther than either in this direction. Many expressions of this piety occur in his writings,

printed or unprinted, — for I have read most of his manuscripts, — and I have by me an unpublished fragment on "Gratitude," dated February 24, 1838, a few months earlier than he first appeared as an author, before his townsmen, at the Lyceum, in his twenty-first year:—

Gratitude [1]

As in his strength, so in his weakness does Man's divinity appear. For he is not denied the heavenly satisfaction of beneficence; to him is given, be he high or low, not only well to wish but well to do to his meanest fellow-men: in this, his chief prerogative, partner of God, though far behind in it. And if his hand be weak, and his faint *word* is not enough to conjure into life the immortal deed — in his good *will* is more divinity. For with the Almighty, willing is doing — the gracious deed forth-springing into life and light as soon as willed. Such is Man's privilege that, if not the source, yet is he oft the channel through which God's blessings flow on all mankind. Solely his is heaven-born Gratitude, twin sister of Benevolence; of Heaven born, though bred on earth; rare ornament that exalts the lowly mind to a level with its proudest benefactor, oft cancelling the debt with coin from Heaven's own mint. The noble soul, itself in turn made debtor, shrinks to accept so rich a recompense; and hence comes angelic strife, contention without war, — a spectacle for Heaven, or rather, Heaven on earth.

[1] Possibly from Henry More.

We have seen how Thoreau composed literature; but he was also its critic; and I find in stray sheets of his Journal of 1843 a specimen of his criticism. He was reading in a New York library, while living at Staten Island, the Elizabethan poets, and the prose of Sir Walter Raleigh and others, and he wrote this: —

It is one great and rare merit of the old tragedy that it says something. The words slide away very fast, but toward some conclusion. It has to do with things and not words; and the reader feels as if he were advancing. It does not seem to make much odds what the author has to say, at this distance of time, if he only deliver himself of it in a downright and manly way. We like Marlowe because he is so plain-spoken and direct, and does not waste the time. . . . Though we discover in Raleigh's verses the vices of the courtier, and they are not equally sustained, — as if his genius were warped by the frivolous society of the Court, — he was capable of rising to unusual heights. His genius seems to have been fitted for short flights of unmatched sweetness and vigor, but by no means for the sustained loftiness of the epic poet. One who read his verses would say that he had not grown to be the man he promised. They have occasionally a strength of character and heroic tone rarely expressed or appreciated; powers and excellences so peculiar as to be almost unique specimens of their kind in the language. He anticipated the judgment of posterity with respect to Spenser's "Faerie Queene," and by his sympathy and advice, encouraged

the poet to go on with his work, which he had laid aside. In Raleigh's own poems, though insignificant in number and length, his life naturally culminates, and his secret aspirations appear. For poetry is a piece of very private history, which unostentatiously lets us into the secret of a man's life. Poetry is always impartial and unbiassed evidence. The misfortune and incongruity of the man appear in the fact that he was at once the author of the "Maxims of State," and "The Soul's Errand." With all his heroism he was not heroic enough; with all his manliness he was servile and dependent, with all his aspirations he was ambitious.

But alas! What is Truth? That which we know not. What is Beauty? That which we see not. What is Heroism? That which we are not.

Donne was not a poet, but a man of strong sense, — a sturdy English thinker, full of conceits and whimsicalities; hammering away at his subject, be it eulogy or epitaph, sonnet or satire, with the patience of a day-laborer; without the least taste, but with an occasional fine distinction and poetic utterance of a high order. He was rather Doctor Donne than the poet Donne. He gropes, for the most part; his letters are perhaps best.

Daniel the poet does really sometimes deserve praise for his moderation; and you find him risen into poetry before you know it. Some strong sense appears in his Epistles; but you have to remember too often in what age he wrote; yet Shakespeare was his contemporary. He strikes us as a retired scholar, who has a small vein of poesy, which he is ambitious to work.

Lovelace is what his name expresses — of slight material to make a poet's fame. His goings and comings are of no great account. His taste is not so much love of the good as fear of the bad; though in one or two instances he has written fearlessly and memorably.

In contrast with this delicate discrimination, take this meditation of Thoreau at Staten Island in November, 1843, upon a topic of which we have heard much and seen much fulfilled in the seventy-odd years since. The man here cited was one of the founders of the woodland democracy of early Wisconsin — a little older than my original, generous, and humorous old friend, Andrew Elmore, of Green Bay, or than General Dodge and Alexander Mitchell. He was Moses Strong, an Eastern man transplanted to the region west of Milwaukee. How Thoreau became acquainted with his name is unknown — possibly from his friend Channing, who had lived on a prairie of Illinois, near the Wisconsin border, for a year or two. But here is the passage: —

American Literature at the West

Saturday, November 4, 1843. We must look to the West for the growth of new literature, manners, architecture, etc. Already there is more language there than here which is the growth of the soil. Good Greekish

words are there in abundance, — good because necessary and expressive; 'diggings' for instance. If you analyze a Greek word you will not get anything simpler, truer, more poetical: many others also, which now look so ram-slang-like and colloquial when printed, another generation will cherish and affect, as genuine American and standard. Read some Western stump-speech, and though it be untoward and rude enough, there will not fail to be some traits of genuine eloquence, and some original and forcible statement, which will remind you of the orators of antiquity. I am already inclined to read the stump-speeches of the West, rather than the Beauties of our Atlantic orators.

Here is an extract from the speech of a (Wisconsin) man named Strong, whom the reporter understood "to live somewhere over near the Mississippi, in the mining country. He had a pitcher of whiskey brought into the court-room and set on the table before him, from which he drank long and frequently." It was a speech in defence of a member of the Legislative Council of the Territory, who had shot a fellow-member in a dispute in the Council-chamber. This is a part of Moses Strong's address to the jury:—

"Gentlemen of the Jury: I don't know what your religion is, nor I don't care. I hain't got much myself, —though Jesus Christ was a mighty good man. Now, gentlemen, I am one of those kind of men who live pretty fast. I believe men generally live over about the same surface: some live long and narrow, and others live broad and short."

(Adverting to an old gentleman, one of the witnesses,

he said:) "I would not like to charge him with perjuring himself, because he and I were members of the Council together. We were tolerable good friends, though always quarrelling. He was always on one side; he was just like the handle of this pitcher" (taking up the pitcher and pointing to the handle). "Here gentlemen, this was him, and here" (pointing to the nose of the pitcher), "this was the estimable Moses, and these were our relative positions. I believe we never got so near as to drink a glass of water together, — but I'll drink his health now, anyhow" (catching up the pitcher and pouring down a "strangler" of whiskey). "As for the murdered man, he is dead; there is no doubt of it: he is dead! — dead! — dead as a smelt; in the language of Tippecanoe and Tyler too, he is a 'gone coon.'" And before he concluded, he reeled with intoxication.

The speech of the Secretary of State, which followed, is said to have been "dignified, able, and suited to the occasion, — as was also the closing argument for the prosecution." Perhaps it is needless to add that the defendant was acquitted.

There was humor in this citation; but Thoreau could take a broad and serious view of our national situation, — in the days of Tippecanoe and Tyler too, when the country seemed given over to riot and noise in its politics, — as this poem evinces, sent to the "Dial," but never printed there: —

HENRY DAVID THOREAU

Our Country

It is a noble country where we dwell,
Fit for a stalwart race to summer in,
From Madawaska to Red River raft,
From Florid Keys to the Missouri Forks
See what unwearied and what copious streams
Come tumbling to the East and Southern shore,
To find a man stand on their lowland banks:
Behold the innumerous rivers and the lakes
Where he may drink to quench his summer thirst;
And the broad rice and corn fields yonder, where
His hands may gather for his winter's store.

See the fair reaches of the northern lakes,
To cool his summer with their inland breeze,
And the long slumbering Appalachian range,
Offering its slopes to his unwearied knees.
See what a long-lipped sea doth clip the shores,
And noble strands where navies may find port:
See Boston, Baltimore and New York stand
Fair in the sunshine on the eastern sea, —
And yonder, too, the fair green prairie.

See the Red race with sullen step retreat,
Emptying its graves, striking the wigwam tent,
And where the rude camps of its brethren stand,
Dotting the distant green, — their herds around, —
In serried ranks, and with a distant clang,
Their fowl fly o'er, bound to the northern lakes,
Whose plashing waves invite their webbèd feet.

Such the fair reach and prospect of the land;
The journeying Summer creeps from south to north

With wearied feet, resting in many a vale.
Its length doth tire the seasons to o'ercome,
Its widening breadth doth make the sea-breeze pause
And spend its breath against the mountain's side:
Still serene Summer paints the southern fields,
While the stern Winter reigns on northern hills.

Look nearer; know the lineaments of each face, —
Learn the far-travelled race, and find here met
The so-long gathering congress of the world!
The Afric race, brought here to curse its fate, —
Erin to bless, — the patient German too, —
Th' industrious Swiss, the fickle, sanguine Gaul,
And manly Saxon, leading all the rest.
All things invite this Earth's inhabitants
To rear their lives to an unheard-of height,
And meet the expectation of the land:
To give at length the restless race of men
A pause in the long westering caravan.

This is not a great poem, surely; but it has good poetical features, and might well have been admitted to the "Dial." An examination of the manuscript shows where Thoreau made slight pencil corrections; but these did not avail to make it pass the Emersonian tests. Possibly it was Margaret Fuller who rejected it, as she had in December, 1840, the "Service" essay, concerning which she wrote to the young author: —

The essay is rich in thoughts, and I should be pained not to meet it again. But then the thoughts seem to

me so out of their natural order that I cannot read it through without pain. I never once feel myself in a stream of thought, but seem to hear the grating of tools on the mosaic. It is true, as Mr. Emerson says, that essays not to be compared with this have found their way into the "Dial." But then, these are more unassuming in their tone, and have an air of quiet good-breeding which induces us to permit their presence. Yours is so rugged that it ought to be commanding.

What she said of it in December, 1840, had much truth; and so had her remarks on Thoreau's genius in a letter written some months later: —

He is healthful, rare, of open eye, ready hand and noble scope. He sets no limits to his life, nor to the invasions of Nature; he is not wilfully pragmatical, ascetic or fantastical. But his thought lies too detached; truth is seen too much in detail; there is a want of fluent sense.

These defects were soon overcome.

Thoreau was a good reader of human nature; a little more turned aside in his judgment by whims and caprice than Emerson; but when his eye fell on his brother man or sister woman, he saw their true character, and sometimes revealed it to them, for their astonishment, as Jones Very did. Among the Walden manuscripts I found this

passage, written a few years after his Staten Island experiences: —

Visitors in Walden Woods

Sometimes there would come to my house at once half a dozen railroad repairers, healthy and sturdy working-men, descended from sound bodies, and still transmitting them from remote days to more remote. Some of them had got a rude wisdom withal, and a courtesy which I love, — thanks to their dear-bought experience. I met them so often in the woods that they began to look upon me at last as one of their kin. One, a handsome young sailor-like man, says to me to-day, —"Sir, I like your notions; I think I shall live so myself. Only I should like a wilder country, where there is more game. I have been among the Indians near Appalachicola. I have lived with them. I like your kind of life. Good-day. I wish you success and happiness." [This was evidently one of those naturally polite Southern youths, like the Kentuckian I met on the Missouri River steamboat ten years later.] They came in troops on Sundays, in clean shirts, with washed hands and faces, and fresh twigs in their hands. Circumstances and employments affect but slowly the finer qualities of our nature. I observed in some of these men an inextinguishable and ineradicable refinement and delicacy of nature (older and more worth than the sun and moon) which are commonly thought to adorn the drawing-room only. Sometimes I fancied a genuine magnanimity, — more than Greek or Roman, — equal to the least occasion of unexplored

and uncontaminated descent. Greater traits methought I noticed in the shortest intercourse than are recorded of any of the worthies — Epaminondas, Socrates or Cato. They had faces homely, hard and seamed, like the rocks; but human and wise; embracing Copt and Mussulman, all races and nations, — pacha or Sultan, — Selim, Mustapha, or Mahmoud in disguise. Under some of the ancient and wrinkled, almost forlorn visages, as of an Indian chieftain, slumber the world-famous humanities of man. You can tell a nobleman's head among a thousand, — though he may be shoveling gravel six rods off, in the midst of a gang, with a cotton handkerchief tied about it. Such a one is to succeed the worthies of history.

It was this gift of insight which made Thoreau and Emerson recognize the heroism of John Brown, under his "rustic exterior."

CHAPTER IX

THOREAU AS FRIEND, NEIGHBOR, AND CITIZEN

WRITING his book of "Sonnets and Canzonets," twenty years after Thoreau's death, Bronson Alcott had this to say of a common libel upon the poet-naturalist — that he was a recluse, misanthropic anarchist, aiming to overturn the foundations of human society and government: —

> "Much do they wrong our Henry, wise and kind,
> Morose who name thee, cynical to men,
> Forsaking manners civil and refined
> To build thyself in Walden woods a den, —
> There flout society, flatter the rude hind:
> We better knew thee, loyal citizen!
> Thou, Friendship's all-adventuring pioneer,
> Civility itself would civilize."

His friends often encountered this misconception of his true character, especially after the School of Philosophy opened at Concord in 1879, when the Hegelians from St. Louis and its region appeared in force, and must have all characters tested by the Prussian standard, which has been for some years making much mischief in the world. The mistake grew partly out of his humorous way of expressing himself, and partly from

the dulness of his hearers and readers. He had a mind truly independent, and in youth was perhaps rather too frequent in declaring his independence, either in prose or verse. For example: —

Ye princes, keep your realms
  And circumscribèd power;
Not wide, as are my dreams,
  Nor rich, as is this hour.
What can ye give which I have not?
What can ye take which I have got?
  Can ye defend the dangerless?
  Can ye inherit nakedness?

What is your whole Republic worth?
  Ye hold out vulgar lures;
Why will ye be disparting earth,
  When all of Heaven is yours?

'T is easier to treat with kings,
  And please our country's foes,
Than treat with Conscience of the things
  Which only Conscience knows.

Then there was a lurking humor in almost all that he said — a dry wit, often expressed, but not always understood. Of his fidelity in friendship, Channing as usual has said the best thing: —

It is needless to dwell on the genial and hospitable entertainer he always was. His readers came many miles to see him, attracted by his writings. Those who

came when they could no more see him, as strangers on a pilgrimage, seemed as if they had been his intimates, so warm and cordial was the sympathy they received from his letters. No whim of coldness, no absorption of his time by public or private business, deprived those to whom he belonged of his kindness and affection. He was at the mercy of no caprice; of a firm will and uncompromising sternness in his moral nature, he carried the same qualities into his relation with others, and gave them the best he had without stint. He loved firmly, acted up to his love, was a believer in it; took pleasure and satisfaction in abiding by it. There was no affectation or hesitancy in his dealing with his friends. He meant friendship, and meant nothing else, and stood by it without the slightest abatement; not veering as a weathercock with each shift of a friend's fortune; or like those who bury their early friendships in order to gain room for fresh corpses.

His quick and self-sacrificing friendship for John Brown, of Kansas, was a case in point. He had met him but twice, for a few hours each time, but he had fathomed his character and main purpose, without knowing or being curious about his plans. The promptness and moral courage with which he made himself the champion of Brown after his capture at Harper's Ferry, and long before the popular voice declared him the people's hero, would have made Thoreau a famous

leader in times of revolution had he ever chosen that path to fame. When the news from Virginia came, and the true nature of Brown developed itself through the providential presence and uncensored accuracy of the reporter of the "New York Herald," at the colloquy with the magnates of the Old Dominion, Thoreau, already prepared, as Emerson was, by what he had seen of the man, was excited to an unwonted degree by the daily bulletins. He said of those thrilling days: —

> If any one who has seen Brown in Concord can now pursue any other train of thought, I do not know what he is made of. If he gets his usual allowance of sleep, I will warrant him to fatten easily, under any circumstances which do not touch his body or purse. I put a piece of paper and a pencil under my pillow, and when I could not sleep, I wrote in the dark.

(He had been in the habit of this in his nightly rambles.)

From these notes he made up his "Plea for Captain John Brown," which he read to his townsmen in the church vestry, where Wendell Phillips had confronted the conservatism of Concord many years before, supported by the younger Thoreaus one of whom reported Phillips in the "Liberator." On this new occasion

Henry summoned his village audience himself, without waiting to be invited. He then hastened away to Worcester, to read the speech to his friends, Blake, Higginson, and Brown, where it was reported; finally, and all within a fortnight from the capture of Brown, he gave it to Theodore Parker's great audience at the Fraternity Lectures in Boston; and it went over the country in newspaper columns. What was first noteworthy in this impassioned address was the complete absence of any apology for the hero; quite the contrary was his tone: —

For once we are lifted out of the dust of politics into the region of truth and manhood. No man in America has ever stood up so persistently and effectively for the dignity of human nature, — knowing himself for a man, and the equal of any and all governments. He could not have been tried by a jury of his peers, because his peers did not exist. When a man stands up serenely against the condemnation and vengeance of mankind, the spectacle is a sublime one, and we become criminals in comparison. Do yourselves the honor to recognize him; he needs none of your respect. I rejoice that I live in this age, — that I am his contemporary. When were the good and the brave ever in a majority? Would you have had him wait till that time came, till you and I came over to him?

Ethan Allen and Stark, to whom he may in some respects be compared, were rangers in a lower and less

important field. They could bravely face their country's foes, but he had the courage to face his country herself when she was in the wrong. A Western writer says, to account for his escape from so many perils, that he was "concealed under a rural exterior," as if, in that prairie land, a hero should, by good rights, wear a citizen's dress only.

Later in the year that saw the emancipation of the slaves begun, — and in three years it was accomplished, — Thoreau wrote other pages on Brown in his Journal, and they were read by Brown's grave in the Adirondac forest the next Fourth of July. In them he said: —

What avail all your scholarly accomplishments and learning, compared with wisdom and manhood? To omit his other behavior, see what a work this comparatively unread and unlettered man wrote within six weeks. He wrote in prison, not a History of the World, like Raleigh, but an American book which I think will live longer than that. I do not know of such words, uttered under such circumstances, and so copiously withal, in Roman or English or any history. The *art* of composition is as simple as the discharge of a bullet from a rifle, and its masterpieces imply an infinitely greater force behind them. This unlettered man's speaking and writing are standard English. Some words and phrases deemed vulgarisms and Americanisms before, he has made standard American.

Of all the men who were said to be my contemporaries, it seemed to me that John Brown was the only one who *had not died.* I meet him at every turn. He is more alive than ever he was. He has earned immortality. He is not confined to North Elba nor to Kansas. He is no longer working in secret. He works in public, and in the clearest light that shines on this land.

Brave words! of which Thoreau did not live to see even the near fulfilment; for he died before the tide of defeat in the Civil War had turned; and Lincoln, the disciple of John Brown, had not issued his first Emancipation Decree. But it followed the foray in Virginia as naturally as consequent follows antecedent; and Thoreau implicitly foretold it.

A minor incident followed closely upon the memorial meeting for Brown at Concord, in which Thoreau took an active part — finding in Andrew Marvell a verse none had noted before, which fitted the occasion: —

> "When the sword glitters o'er the judge's head,
> And fear has coward churchmen silencèd,
> 'T is then the Poet's time; 't is then he draws,
> And singly fights forsaken Virtue's cause.
> He, when the wheel of empire whirleth back,
> And though the world's disjointed axle crack,
> Sings still of ancient laws and better times;
> Seeks suffering Good, arraigns successful crimes."

The incident is this, and it well illustrates the friendliness and neighborliness of Thoreau. I had received a visit from an enthusiastic but feeble youth, a grandson of Francis Jackson, the friend and partisan of Garrison and Phillips (as I was), who had somehow heard of Brown's secret plans and wished to join him and carry him a sum of money, of which Brown always stood in need. I advised him to send the money, but not to go himself; for I doubted if his weak frame and impulsive spirit could carry him through so hard a campaign as Brown had entered on. Young Meriam went, however, and by a sort of miracle, and by the care taken of him by Owen Brown, he escaped through Pennsylvania and Ohio to Canada. But in early December he had found his way back to Boston, and was consulting Phillips and his other friends, urging a new foray on slavery, in which he was wildly ready to take part. A large reward was offered for his capture, and there were plenty of scoundrels in Boston who would delight to earn it by waylaying him. He was at the house of his physician, near Mrs. Phillips's home on Harrison Avenue, and Dr. Thayer joined me in the advice I gave him to return, that very night, to Canada, before the rogues got on his trail. He promised to do this,

and I returned to Concord. But in his half-insane state, he missed the train that would have taken him to Montreal the next forenoon and got into a local train that only ran to Concord. He therefore came to my house, and in my absence (making a call in one of the two Thoreau houses), my sister gave him his supper and sent him to bed to keep him out of sight. On my return, before eight o'clock, my sister met me at the door and told me that Meriam was my guest, but had been told that he could not see me that night. I said: "Nor in the morning either, for, if he happens to be arrested, I shall not be a witness against him. He must go early in the morning to South Acton, to take the first train for Canada, and I must get him transportation."

I at once went to Mr. Emerson's house, and said to him, "I would like to borrow your mare, Dolly, early to-morrow morning for a drive to Acton; and if you will favor me so far I will ask Mr. Thoreau to call for it." He replied, "Certainly, and James Burke shall harness her into the carriage at the hour named." I then called on Henry Thoreau, to whom I imparted the matter more fully. "There is a friend at my house who is to take the first train for Canada at South Acton to-morrow, without fail. Mr. Emerson

will lend me Dolly and the carriage; will you oblige me by calling for it, driving it to my door, and taking in my friend? His name is Lockwood, and if he thinks he has any other name, you must not believe him; he has some queer fancies." "Certainly," said Thoreau; he would be there and drive the carriage to and from South Acton. I then returned home, went to bed, and stayed in my chamber while my sister gave Mr. Lockwood his breakfast, and had him in readiness when Thoreau, who was a good driver, appeared and took his passenger, placing him on the back seat, to be less visible should they meet any inquisitive persons on the rather lonely drive of four miles. In an hour or two Thoreau came back, reporting that Mr. Lockwood caught the train, and was well started for Montreal. Neither the driver nor the driven knew who the other really was; but no questions were asked until two years later. Then, in his last illness, Thoreau told me some incidents of the drive. Meriam was in an excited state of mind; and though he wished to go to Canada, and had promised to go, he could not keep to his purpose. He insisted he must see Mr. Emerson before leaving Concord; he had important plans to lay before him; besides, he wished to consult him on some moral and religious

doubts he had. Thoreau listened with grave politeness, and drove the faster toward Acton. Meriam grew more positive and suspicious. "I never saw Mr. Emerson; perhaps may never have another chance: I must go there now. Ah! perhaps you are Mr. Emerson. You look like one of his portraits." "No," said the imperturbable charioteer — urging Dolly to a quicker gait. Thereupon the impetuous youth cried, "Well, I am going back to Concord"; and flung himself from the carriage.

How Thoreau got him in again he never told me; but I always suspected a judicious use of force, such as I should have used on the feeble youth, for his own good; together with that earnest, persuasive speech, natural to the philosopher; for then they fell into discussing some moral issue, and there was no more insurrection till they reached the Acton station, and Thoreau saw his man on board the arriving train, unsuspected by the few observers on that mild winter morning. Driving leisurely back through the township and village, he returned Dolly and the wagon to James Burke, and called at my door, as he walked home to his own late breakfast, to tell me what had happened. The subject was then dismissed, and no explanation was asked

or given until more than two years later, after his return from Minnesota, when, in one of my calls on the invalid, he asked me who my fugitive friend was. Meriam being then out of danger, except as a soldier in the Union army (for the Civil War was well begun), I told Thoreau that it was the grandson of his mother's old friend Francis Jackson whom he had removed from the risk of arrest; and in turn he gave me, with some amusement, the incidents just related. Not till then did he communicate to his mother and sister the errand upon which he had gone that winter morning, to guard an unknown and not very attractive person from risks to which he was exposing himself. My reason for not seeing Meriam was, of course, to have no testimony against him to give in case of his capture, which seemed not unlikely from his thoughtlessness. I never saw him afterward.

I gave shelter to another of the Harper's Ferry fugitives the next spring — C. P. Tidd, then passing by the name of Plumer, who had ventured to Concord to see his old captain's daughter, Anne Brown, a pupil of mine at the time. In the excitement after my own arrest and release, — the latter following my rescue from the kidnappers by a writ of *habeas corpus*, and my

discharge by Chief Justice Shaw, in April, 1860, — Thoreau, with other friends, was active in my sister's behalf, during my brief absences; and indeed he was apt at all neighborly service for his friends, or for the poor, to whom the Thoreaus were ever kind.

Emerson said of Thoreau at his funeral in May, 1862, in the parish church, where it was held, like Hawthorne's, Emerson's, and Channing's, afterwards, — rather against the wish of his mother and sister: —

> A truth-speaker he, capable of the most strict and deep conversation; a physician to the wounds of any soul: a friend, knowing not only the secret of friendship, but almost worshiped by those few persons who knew the deep value of his mind and great heart. His inexorable demand on all for exact truth gave an austerity which made this willing hermit more solitary even than he wished.

In saying this, Emerson may have been thinking of that short, painful period, about five years before his death, when Thoreau felt himself estranged from Emerson, so long his dearest friend; and gave expression to his sorrow in his Diary for February, 1857. In accounting for it, he used this striking language, — applicable to Emerson in certain moods, and with certain qualifications: —

I perceive that some persons are enveloped and confined by a certain crust of manners, which, though it may sometimes be a fair and transparent enamel, yet only repels and saddens the beholder, since by its rigidity it seems to repress all further expansion. They are viewed as at a distance, or like an insect under a tumbler.[1] This is to stand upon your dignity. I say in my thought to my neighbor, who was once my friend, "It is of no use to speak the truth to you, you will not hear it. What, then, shall I say to you?"

Why this doubleness, these compliments? They are the worst of lies. A lie is not worse between traders than a compliment between friends. . . . I have not yet known a friendship to cease, I think. I fear I have experienced its decaying. Morning, noon, and night, I suffer a physical pain, an aching of the breast which unfits me for my tasks. It is perhaps most intense at evening.

This last word is pathetic; it was at evening in those later years that he saw most of Emerson. The estrangement passed away, not without leaving some trace in the more sensitive heart of Thoreau.

I once sought to explain this episode by the inscrutable working of heredity, in these two friends of such diverse ancestry. To his inheritance Emerson owed his matchless propriety

[1] Channing, in his Life of Thoreau, quoted this, evidently knowing its cause.

and decorum — a sense of what was fitting in all the occasions of life, and a consideration for the tastes and feelings of others, which made him unique among reformers. Thoreau inherited a trenchant individualism, scanty of respect for the merely conventional, and little disposed to make those concessions, in small matters, which the daily intercourse of life requires. At heart profoundly unselfish and courteous, he was on the surface brusque and pugnacious; and at times, in spite of his distinction, a little too plebeian in his bearing; while Emerson was the gentle patrician. Whether strictly true or not, this may serve as a clue to the incident.

Among some notes of Emerson's table-talk during my acquaintance both with him and Thoreau, I find this said of his friend, which may give the other side of the story: —

> My children think Henry rather snubs them. He said the *Linnæa borealis* did not flower in Concord, till E. carried it to him, gathered near one of our paths in the Park. Why is he never frank? That was an excellent saying of Elizabeth Hoar's — "I love Henry, but I can never like him." What is so cheap as politeness? Never had I the least social pleasure with him, though often the best conversation; in which he goes along accumulating one thing upon another so lavishly — when he is not pugnacious.

And in matters practical he makes it worth my while to pay him surveyor's wages for doing other things [the occasion being his planting a pine wood on Emerson's knoll near Walden, where Thoreau's beanfield had been in the Walden days]. He is so thoughtful; has such a conscience about it, and does so much more than he bargained to do. When he undertakes anything you may be sure the thing will be done: he has the common sense of Shakespeare.

The early relations with Hawthorne which Thoreau held during the first residence of Hawthorne in Concord, and with Channing at his first arrival there in the spring of 1843, have already been mentioned. With Hawthorne those relations were never very intimate, but there was much mutual respect one for the other. The skating trio of Emerson, Hawthorne, and Thoreau, in the winter of 1843–44, has been well described, — but perhaps with too evident though natural partiality. Mrs. Hawthorne wrote: —

One afternoon Mr. Emerson and Mr. Thoreau went skating down the river from the Old Manse with Mr. Hawthorne. Henry Thoreau is an experienced skater, and was figuring dithyrambic dances and Bacchic leaps on the ice — very remarkable, but very ugly, methought. Next him followed Mr. Hawthorne, who, wrapped in his cloak, moved like a self-impelled Grecian statue, stately and grave. Mr. Emerson closed the

line — evidently too weary to hold himself erect, pitching head-foremost, half lying on the air. He came into the Manse to rest himself; and said to me that Hawthorne was a tiger, a bear, a lion, — in short a satyr, and there was no tiring him out; he might be the death of a man like himself. And then, turning upon me that kindling smile for which he is so memorable, he added, "Mr. Hawthorne is such an Ajax, — who can cope with him?"

I have occasionally skated with Emerson on Walden, and found him a good, but quiet skater — not too energetic, as Thoreau and Channing were, being younger men; and probably less graceful than Hawthorne, who had manifest advantages of face and figure. But all the Concord authors, including Alcott, were equal to most physical exigencies, and, with the exception of Emerson, rather fond than otherwise of manual labor. Alcott and Thoreau were good mechanics, and could build houses if needful. Thoreau, to be sure, criticised Alcott's picturesque summer-house — built for Emerson while he was lecturing in England in the autumn of 1847. Thoreau had then left his Walden cabin to take charge of the Emerson household during its owner's absence; and could not avoid witnessing the slow progress of the "arbor," as Thoreau styled it. Channing

was also looking after his own household at the Ponkawtassett height of land, a mile or two to the westward; but his daily walks brought him often past the Emerson house, and he, too, had his jest at the Alcott edifice. A little before the middle of November, 1847, it seems to have had its roof put on, and the jests began to wound the sensibilities of the philosopher. Thoreau and Channing both wrote to London by the same mail, and Thoreau said: —

> Alcott has heard that I laughed, and so set the people laughing at his arbor; though I never laughed louder than when I was on the ridgepole. But now I have not laughed for a long time, it is so serious. He is very grave to look at. Not knowing all this, I strove innocently enough, the other day, to engage his attention to my mathematics.
>
> "Did you ever study geometry, the relation of straight lines to curves? the transition from finite to the infinite? Fine things about it in Newton and Leibnitz." But he would have none of it; men of taste preferred the natural curve. Ah, he is a crooked stick himself.

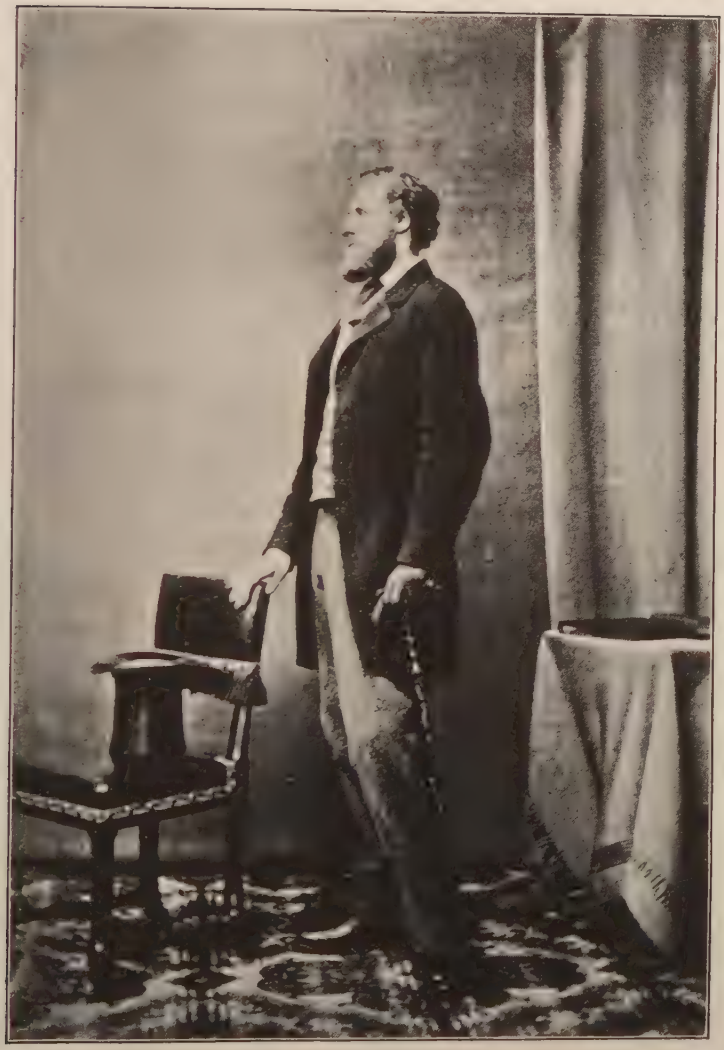
Channing in his letter dwells on the small size of the summer-house, in contrast with the time and pains expended on its construction; it is a Cathedral of Cologne, even a St. Peter's edifice at Rome; and, like Thoreau, he hints that it will

not stand for many years. It was not framed from timbers, but built of a set of branches, young trees, and natural curves, picked up in the woods, and held together by nails and spikes. But it lasted many years, sat for its picture to several artists, and I have often sat in it, sheltered from the sun, and even ascended to its second story, for it was safe and strong. It fulfilled its purpose, which was to be ornamental, and to give useful employment to Mr. Alcott, who then had many unused powers. These three or four friends were so friendly that they could laugh at one another in the intervals of their serious thought, and no bitter drop be left in the cup of their mirth.

A friend who came into the Concord circle late, attaching himself specially to Thoreau, was the English scholar, colonizer, and country gentleman Thomas Cholmondeley, who happened upon Thoreau by accident, as it were, and was so much affected by him as to live for a time with him, visit him again from the ends of the earth, present him with a small library of rare books, and correspond with him for a time. He was the grandson of a Shropshire squire, the son of a clergyman at Hodnet, the nephew of Bishop Heber; an Oxford graduate, a sheep-farmer in New Zealand for some years, a volunteer for the

Crimean war, without coming into action; and finally the heir of an old property, and the husband of a lovely bride. He died when the substance of his life was just beginning. He had been twenty years preparing for it, and was carried to the grave before he had fairly entered on it. He had many friends in America, more in England, and seems to have had no enemies. His letters to Thoreau, and a few of Thoreau's to him have been printed; here a few facts and particulars can be put together which will connect his memory with the more permanent fame of Thoreau.

In one of his regular letters to his chief correspondent in mature life, Harrison Blake of Worcester, Thoreau casually mentioned (October 1, 1854), "A young Englishman, Mr. Cholmondeley, is just now waiting for me to take a walk with him." It was the first of many walks, in course of which he became almost as much interested in his late-found friend, as Cholmondeley had been interested in him. His new friend had urged him to visit England, as the young student who afterwards became a Catholic priest, Father Hecker, had done ten years before; and had Thoreau lived to be fifty, and his friend continued in life and in England, they would doubtless have met and rambled there. But the Concord friend died be-



THOMAS CHOLMONDELEY

fore he reached forty-five, and Thomas Cholmondeley died at Florence on his wedding journey, in 1864, when he had just reached forty. He had gone out to New Zealand in 1851,[1] with a party of religious colonists (for he had been religiously educated, and two of his brothers were clergymen), and on returning to England a year later, he prepared a volume on the island, which he called "Ultima Thule"; and then, with a few letters of introduction, he came to the United States in the summer of 1854, to see what sort of a commonwealth we had established here. He found that Thoreau, whom he so much admired, had been protesting against our national polity by refusing to pay taxes, making emancipation speeches, and other conduct which must have startled the Oxford graduate not a little. As time went on, before he came over again (partly to visit Thoreau, and partly to see the West Indies), he found that his friend had been upholding John Brown of Osawatomie in his warfare against slavery in Kansas, and was soon to be his champion in the desperate foray at Harper's Ferry. All this did not mitigate in the least his admiration for Thoreau; indeed, he gave hospitality to Edwin Morton, who had been fully cognizant of Brown's

[1] In the Charlotte Jane, a ship of Lord Lyttelton.

general plan for freeing the slaves, and was then in England to avoid giving testimony against persons suspected of being Brown's supporters. Morton had been with me in college, had with me made the acquaintance of Cholmondeley, and had met Thoreau in Concord, where, after his return from England in 1860, he had frequently visited me. In his company Thoreau had been my guest at a dinner-party, and there we heard him sing his one song of those later years, "Tom Bowline," in memory of his lost brother John. Consequently Morton had been an agreeable guest to our English friend, who had himself been here again.

Late in November, 1858, he had written to Concord from Montreal that he was in Canada, and on his way to the West Indies; that he would soon come to Concord, and urged Thoreau to go with him to the tropics. In his father's last illness, this the faithful son could not do; but he detained Cholmondeley a few days in town, and took him on a trip to New Bedford, to show him a whaling town, as New Bedford then was, and introduce him to Daniel Ricketson, his intimate friend and Channing's. To Blake he gave this estimate of his English friend, "He is rather more demonstrative than before, and, on the whole, what would be

called 'a good fellow,' — a man of principle, and quite reliable; but very peculiar."

Mr. Ricketson gave this brief analysis of his visitor, on that eventful day: —

> He is a tall, spare man, thirty-five years of age, of fair and fresh complexion, blue eyes, light brown and fine hair, nose small and Roman, beard light and worn full, with a mustache. A man of fine culture and refinement of manners, educated at Oriel College, Oxford, of an old Cheshire family by his father, a clergyman.

From his first visit to America he returned to England in January, 1855, and at once busied himself in collecting a library of Oriental books for Thoreau, which he sent over in the autumn. They arrived, November 30, 1855, and I saw them soon after, in a new case which Thoreau had just made for them, out of driftwood that he brought home from his afternoon voyages on the river. He wrote to Blake: "They are in English, French, Latin, Greek, and Sanscrit. One is splendidly bound and illustrated." Several of them, and their cases are now mine.

More exactly Thoreau described these books as "a royal gift in the shape of twenty-one distinct works (one in nine volumes — forty-four volumes in all) almost exclusively relating to Hindoo liter-

ature, and scarcely one of them to be bought in America. I am familiar with many of them," he adds, "and know how to prize them." To this his friend replied: "I had indeed studied your character closely and knew what you would like. Besides, I had, even from our first acquaintance, a previous memory of you, like the vision of a landscape a man has seen, he cannot tell where." Trusting to this previous acquaintance, Cholmondeley, writing from Rome in December, 1856, proceeded to give his friend some good advice.

Counsels of a Wise Friend

You are not living altogether as I could wish. You ought to have society. A college, a conventual life is not for you. You should be the member of some society not yet formed. You want it greatly, and without this you will be liable to moulder away as you get older. Forgive my English plainness of speech. Your love for and intimate acquaintance with Nature is ancillary to some affection which you have not yet discovered. The great Kant never dined alone. Once, when there was danger of an empty dinner-table, he sent his valet out, bidding him catch the first man he could find, and bring him in. So necessary was the tonic, the effervescing cup of conversation, to his deeper labors.

Laughter, chatter, politics, and even the prose of ordinary talk is better than nothing. Are there no clubs in Boston? The lonely man is a diseased man, I

greatly fear. See how carefully Mr. Emerson avoids it! and yet who dwells, in all essentials more religiously free than he? Now I would have you one of a well-knit society or guild, from which rays of thought and activity might emanate, and penetrate every corner of your country. By such a course you would not lose Nature. Take up every man as you take up a leaf, and look at him attentively. This would be easy for you, who have such powers of observation, and of attracting the juices of all you meet to yourself. Even I, who have no such power, somehow find acquaintances, — and nobody knows what I get from those about me. They give me all they have, and never suspect it. What treasures I gleaned at Concord! I wish I lived near you, and that you could somehow originate some such society as I have in my head.

What you are engaged in I suspect to be Meditations on the Higher Laws, as they show themselves in Common Things.

This, if well weaved, may become a great work; but I fear this kind of study may become too desultory. Try a history. How if you could write the sweet, beautiful history of Massachusetts? Positively, there is an immense field open. Or take Concord, — still better, perhaps. Take the spirit of Izaak Walton, with a spice of Gilbert White! It would be a great labor, and a grand achievement, — one for which you are singularly qualified. . . . "He is beginning to preach now," you will say. Well, then, let us have a turn at politics and literature. I was certain, from the first, that Buchanan would be President, because I felt sure the Middle

States are not with the North. Nor is the North itself yet in earnest. You are fond of humanity, — but you like commerce and a great heap, and a big name better. Besides, your principle and bond of union appears to be most negative; you do not like slavery. Is there any positive root of strength in the North? Where and what? You have indeed in New England the genius of liberty, and for construction and management; you have a wonderful *aplomb*, and are never off your feet. But when I think of your meagreness of invention, your absurd whims and degraded fancies of spirit-rapping, etc., and the unseemly low ebb of your ordinary literature, I tremble. You have one Phœnix — the greatest man since Shakespeare, I believe; but where is the rest of the choir? It is the same as in England — all is fragmentary, poor and draggletail. I have seen some fragments by a certain W. Whitman, who appears to be a strong man. But why write fragments? it is not modest. There is a man we both of us respect and admire, — Carlyle, — but has he not damaged his hand beyond cure? He drives a cart, and strikes against every stone he sees. He has no "perception" of the highest kind. A good preacher, — but, after all, a creaking, bumping, tortuous, involved, and visionary author.

This was good advice and sound opinion, with most of which Thoreau agreed, but what could be done? The time was not yet ripe; and when the hour had come, the men were gone. Thoreau, in return for his gift, sent him American books —

among them Whitman's "Leaves of Grass," which came out in the summer of 1855. His friend responded from London (May 26, 1857): —

Walt Whitman's poems have only been heard of in England to be laughed at and voted offensive. Here are Leaves indeed! which I can no more understand than the Book of Enoch, or the inedited poems of Daniel. I cannot believe that such a man lives, unless I actually touch him. He is further ahead of me in yonder West, than Buddha is behind me in the Orient. I find reality and beauty, mixed with not a little violence and coarseness, — both of which are to me effeminate. I am amused at his views of sexual energy, which, however, are absurdly false. The man appears to me not to know how to behave himself. I find the *gentleman* altogether left out of the book! Altogether these Leaves completely puzzle me. Is there actually such a man as Whitman? Has any one seen or handled him? His is a tongue "not understanded" of the English people. It is the first book I have ever seen which I should call a "new book," — and thus I would sum up the impression it makes upon me.

At his visit to Concord the next year (November, 1858) he learned by conversation with Thoreau, Emerson, Alcott, and perhaps others who had seen Whitman, that he was a real person, not without great qualities; though repulsive to the great mass of his compatriots, especially to women; who, at first, in Concord, refused to associ-

ate with him. Whitman's Concord friends wished to invite him to their houses; but in the spring of 1860, when he was in Boston, printing a new edition of his "Leaves," neither Sophia Thoreau nor Mrs. Alcott nor, as I am told, Mrs. Emerson, would allow him to be invited. So he never came till twenty-one years later, when he visited me for a few days, and dined at the Emersons' — having met them the night before, along with Mr. Alcott and Louisa, at my house by the river. Thoreau and his sister and Mrs. Alcott had died, or they also would have been present; for Whitman's course in the Civil War, and a greater familiarity with his books, had mainly removed the original impression. That impression I was bound to disregard; for I had first seen him at the trial of my case in the Boston Court House in April, 1860, — sitting near the entrance in a green jacket, prepared, as I heard afterward, to join with others in rescuing me from the kidnappers if the court (which I did not expect) should decide against me. Thoreau was not then present; but he would have joined in the same effort, to the extent of his power, and have classed it under his title of "Civil Disobedience." At Christmas, 1859, when our friend Morton dined at Hodnet in the Rectory, with Rev. Zachary Macaulay, who had married

the widow of his predecessor, Cholmondeley's mother, and with that lady herself, he heard from Cholmondeley how the Hodnet Rectory had received the readings from Whitman in 1856: "I began to read a good passage, but did not get far when Mr. Macaulay said, 'I'll not listen to that stuff, — if you go on with it, I'll throw it into the fire.'" This, of course, put a stop to any further acquaintance in that house with "Walt Whitman, a Kosmos." But Miss Mary Cholmondeley, the novelist, a niece of Thomas, probably ventured to peruse him in after years. We have lived to see him much commended in England since, and verses written in his manner by several reputable Englishmen. Cholmondeley himself must have modified his opinion a little, after hearing what Thoreau had to say in Whitman's favor in 1859.

Long intervals passed between letters of these transatlantic correspondents, and the letters written by Thoreau have not all been recovered from the accumulations at Condover Hall, the last residence of Thomas Owen, by which name he inherited that Elizabethan house, afterward the residence of his brother Reginald Cholmondeley. His last letter to Thoreau was dated April 23, 1861, and was answered by me before forwarding it to Henry in Minnesota. Two years later, almost

to a day (April 20, 1863) Mr. Owen, then newly married to Miss Victoria Cotes, died at Florence of a malignant fever, and was carried back to Shropshire for burial in Condover churchyard. His last letter contained this passage: —

The last I heard from you all was from Edwin Morton, who was in England about a year ago; and I hope that he has got over his difficulties, and is in his own country again. I think he has seen rather more of English country life than most Yankee tourists; and appeared to find it *curious*, though I fear he was dulled by our ways. He was too full of ceremony and compliments and bows, which is a mistake here, though very well in Spain. But he made a splendid speech at a volunteer supper; and indeed, the very best, some said, ever heard in this part of the country [Shrewsbury]. Give my affectionate regards to your father, mother and sister; and to Channing, Sanborn, Ricketson, Blake; and Morton, Alcott and Parker. A thought arises in my mind, — whether I may not be enumerating some dead men. Perhaps T. Parker is dead?

He certainly was, and it was strange that Owen did not hear of it. John Thoreau, Sr., had died too, a few weeks after Cholmondeley left Concord. Speaking of the wars then threatened in Europe he wrote: —

These rumors of war make me wish that we had got done with the brutal stupidity of war altogether; and I

believe, Thoreau, that the human race will at last get rid of it, though perhaps not in a creditable way. But such powers will be brought to bear, that it will become monstrous, even to the French.

After fifty-five years, we seem farther from that goal than ever. Thoreau at once wrote to me from Red Wing in Minnesota, at the end of the longest letter I ever got from him, "I am glad to hear that you have written to Cholmondeley, as it relieves me of some responsibility."

Of the persons named in this friendly message, I am now the only survivor. Theodore Parker had died at Florence in May, 1860, and is buried there under a headstone modelled by the sculptor Story. Alcott lived until 1888, and, with Thoreau and Channing (who died in 1901) is buried in Concord. Morton, for whom some concern is expressed, returned to Plymouth, but was so ill of fever during the Civil War that he had never health enough afterward to warrant his serving in the army, but remained a semi-invalid till his death at Morges on Lake Geneva in 1900, where he had spent many years. All these and many more were attached friends and admirers of Henry Thoreau, and had watched with confidence his rise in reputation ever since the publication of his "Walden" in 1854.

CHAPTER X

THOREAU AS MAN OF LETTERS AND OF AFFAIRS

Although Thoreau regarded authorship as his special function in life, prepared himself for that industriously and skilfully, and now has nearly thirty volumes standing against his name in the lists of libraries, he did not expect literature to support him pecuniarily. For that he had other resources, which, in fact, never failed him, until illness deprived him of the power of self-support except with the pen. As schoolmaster, private tutor, pencil-maker, gardener, lecturer, land-surveyor, editor, and general utility man, he was always careful to support himself, and was neither dependant on his family nor on any patron for his daily bread. He arranged a plan of life for himself,[1] usually with the coöperation of his family

[1] This has always been known to those who knew the facts of his early life, though often ignored or misrepresented by persons who undertook to write about him without learning the true state of the case. He was in truth the "superior man" of whom he had occasion to write so often, — that is, he was a sample of that small class, throughout the world, of whom Homer in the Odyssey speaks when relating how Hermes and Calypso recognized each other: —

"The gods are to each other not unknown,
Though far apart they dwell."

and his immediate friends, and was most industrious in carrying it forward.

He was sometimes looked down upon by residents of his township as an idle person; there were a few such within its thirty square miles — but he was not one of those. I have lived there, off and on, for more than sixty years, and when not residing there have kept note of the transactions of the town in all its industries, and I have never seen or heard of a more industrious resident. His tasks began before the earliest haymaker or woodchopper went to his work, and were continued after the latest evening seamstress had set her last stitch. He had many occupations, and was expert in all. He risked no large investments, which might put the small family estate to hazard; for after his brother John's lamented death in 1842, he was the main hope of the family. His investment in his first volume, the "Week," was the largest that he made, I suppose; and for that he paid by the toil of his hands in pencil-making, or by kindred labors. His "Walden" — the only other book he published — paid for itself, and has always continued to sell well. For his eighteen lectures at the Lyceum in Concord, he charged and received nothing; it was the custom of the town to render that service *gratis*. He went much

further, and was inclined to boast that he, as Curator of the Lyceum, had provided his townsmen, for one hundred dollars, with a remarkable course of winter lectures by the best lecturers attainable. It was during the winter of 1843–44, when the young citizen was approaching his twenty-seventh year; and this is his account of it: —

> How much might be done for Concord with $100! I myself have once provided a select course of twenty-five lectures for a winter, together with rent, fuel, and lights, with that sum; which was no inconsiderable benefit to every inhabitant. With $1000 I could purchase for Concord a more complete and select library (in my opinion) than exists in the State, outside of Cambridge and Boston; and perhaps a more available one than any.

This he did as "Curator" of the Lyceum, an institution now nearly ninety years old, in which he was for ten years very active. He received from the citizens in that winter, a year and a half before he went to live by Walden Pond, $109; of that he left the nine dollars in the treasury as a nest-egg for the next winter, and for the rest he did procure excellent lectures in the vestry of the First Parish Church, from Emerson, Theodore Parker, Horace Greeley, George Bancroft, James Freeman Clarke, Henry Giles, Dr. E. H. Chapin

(then a popular orator preaching at Charlestown), and enough others, including himself, to bring the number of lectures up to twenty-five. The highest price paid by him was ten dollars each to Mr. Bancroft and Mr. Giles; to Dr. Chapin eight dollars, to Parker three dollars, and to Emerson, who lectured three times, — nothing. It was etiquette to give your lecture, if you had the honor to live in the town. Wendell Phillips was another of this Spartan band, and Thoreau gave more than one lecture himself.

For all the needs of Concord it was convenient to have a Greek scholar, a land-surveyor, an expert in fish and birds, in soils and insects, in floods and storms, to whom to make appeal in case of need. Thoreau practised surveying for more than ten years, and left a valuable set of maps of the farms he surveyed; he laid out the shorter road to Bedford, over which the trolley car now trundles; and he did extensive land-surveying in other places; for example, at Marcus Spring's large estate in Perth Amboy, New Jersey, where he spent a week in the autumn of 1856, with an occasional visit to New York and Brooklyn, to call on his old friend Greeley or his new acquaintance Walt Whitman, whose "Leaves of Grass" had interested him.

His ventures in writing for the magazines and in editing the "Dial" were instructive, but not profitable pecuniarily. From the "Dial" he got nothing but the labor and the experience; though his papers and verses there first made him known and esteemed as an author. From the "Boston Miscellany," the "Democratic Review," from Griswold and Sartain and the Philadelphian magazinists to whom Greeley introduced him, he got payment after long delays; from the "New York Tribune" he received occasionally prompt and liberal payment. "Putnam's Monthly" and the "Atlantic" began with him, but insisted on altering his essays, which he did not allow; and he withdrew his manuscripts, certain to find a place for them ultimately. He carefully preserved most of them, and they have been printed since his death — often being purchased for large prices. One such came under my notice so peculiarly that the story may here be given.

About the time, in 1904, when I was called upon to examine the three drafts of the manuscript of Thoreau's "Raleigh," Mr. John P. Woodbury, a diligent reader and collector of the printed writings of Thoreau, showed me a letter-sheet of four pages, of which the fourth was partly blank, desiring to know if that was in Henry's handwriting.

I assured him it was, and that, so far as I knew, it had never been printed — in this respect like the "Raleigh," which had only been read as a lecture at the Concord Lyceum, and was in preparation for a place in Emerson's "Dial." This shorter essay was on "Conversation" and was evidently, from the handwriting and the puns, of the earlier period to which "The Service," long in my possession, belonged. Had not the Journal in which it was originally entered been destroyed, it might have been discovered in its original entries there.

Having answered Mr. Woodbury's questions, I then said: "May I ask you a question? Where did you find this, and what did it cost you?" He said, "I bought it of your friend Mr. Goodspeed in Park Street; he asked me fifty dollars, and I paid him forty dollars." As the weight of the letter-sheet did not exceed a quarter-ounce, and forty dollars represents two ounces of gold, my friend had paid for this fragment eight times its weight in gold. Relatively to other essays of Thoreau it is inferior, and would be so regarded by his lovers. Portions of it have appeared in other connections.

In writing about "Conversation," even at an early period in his authorship, Thoreau was dealing with a familiar subject, with which he was

every day at home brought face to face. Mrs. Thoreau, his mother, was, next to Madam Hoar, the mother of the Judge and the Senator, the most talkative person in Concord in my time — a very good talker, too, if there was time to listen. Thoreau always found time. Often have I sat at the family dinner-table engaged in talk with the son, as we sat on opposite sides of the board, facing each other, with the silent father between us at the head of the table, which, as the room was furnished, was the east end. Mrs. Thoreau, who helped to the puddings at the west end, catching some word in our conversation which interested her, would take up that theme and go on with it; often relating things to the credit of her son or other members of her family. Henry would sit silent and attentive, during the long interruption; then, as the last period closed, he would bow slightly to his mother, and resume our dialogue exactly where it had been stayed.

Satirical disquisitions on human frailties or vices make no small part of Thoreau's six volumes, authentically published or republished in various parts of the globe since his death. This satire or moral censure is also largely represented in the fourteen volumes of the Journals printed in Boston. It was such passages, or the accurate reports

by Thoreau of conversations on Cape Cod, as he and Channing walked its beaches and lodged in its cabins, which at first gave the residents there a prejudice against the author as his chapters came out in "Putnam's Magazine." But now, in contrast with such censure, take a few passages from the lost Journals, which deal with what is usually thought to be his best hold on literature — the poetic prose describing aspects of outward Nature, with which he was so intimately conversant.

Autumn and Winter Scenes[1]

Summer passes into autumn in some unimaginable epoch and point of time, like the turning of a leaf. It is pleasant to hear once more the crackling flight of grasshoppers amid the stubble. It is pleasant, when summer is drawing to a close, to hear the cricket piping a Niebelungen Lied in the grass. The feathered race are perhaps the truest heralds of the season, since they appreciate a thousand delicate changes in the atmosphere (which is their own element) of which man cannot be aware. The occasional and transient notes of such birds as migrate early, heard in midsummer or later, are among the earliest indications of the advancing year, — plaintively recalling the Spring. The clear whistle of the oriole is occasionally heard among the elms at this time, as if striving to reawaken the love-season;

[1] Journals of 1842.

or as if, in the long interval since the spring, it had but paused a moment to secure its prey. It harmonizes with the aftermath springing under our feet.

The faint, flitting note of the goldfinch marks the turning-point of the year, and is heard in the gardens by the middle of August; as if this little harbinger of the Fall were prompting Nature to make haste. Its lisping, peeping note, so incessant and universal that it is hardly distinguished more than the creak of the crickets, is one of Nature's ground-tones, and is associated with the rustling of leaves, and the swift lapse of time. The lark, too, sometimes sings again down in the meadow, as in the spring; and the robin peeps, and the bluebirds, old and young, revisit their boxes and hollow trees, as if they would fain repeat the summer, without the intervention of winter.

Dense flocks of bobolinks, russet and rustling, like seeds of the meadow grass floating on the wind, or as if they might be ripe grain thrashed out by the gale, rise before us in our walk. Each tuft gives up its bird. The purple finch, our American linnet, is seen early in October moving south in straggling flocks, and alighting on the apple trees; reminding us of the pine and spruce, cedar and juniper, on whose berries it feeds. In its plumage are the crimson hues of October evenings; as if it had caught and preserved some of their beams. Many a serene evening lies snugly packed under its wing. Then, one after another, these little passengers wing their way seasonably to the haunts of summer, with each a passing warning to man; —

Until at length the north winds blow,
And, beating high mid ice and snow,
The sturdy goose brings up the rear, —
Leaving behind the cold, cold year.

. . . . . .

Silently we unlatch the door, letting the drift fall inward, and step forth like knights encased in steel, to sport with the cutting air. Still through the drifts I see the farmer's early candle, — like a paled star, — emitting a lonely beam from the cottage indoors, as, one by one the sluggish smokes begin to ascend from the chimneys of the farm-houses, midst the trees. Thus from each domestic altar does incense go up each morning to the heavens. Once the stars lose some of their sparkle, and a deep-blue mist skirts the eastern horizon, a lurid and brazen light foretells the approaching day. You hear the sound of woodchopping at the farmer's door, the baying of the housedog, and the distant clarion of cocks. The frosty air seems to convey, only and with new distinctness, the finer particles of sound to our ears. It comes clear and round like a bell, as if there were fewer impediments than in the green atmosphere of summer, to make it faint and ragged. And besides, all Nature is tight-drawn and sonorous, like seasoned wood.

Sounds now come to our ears from a greater distance in the horizon than in the summer. For then Nature is never silent, and the chirp of crickets is incessant; but now the farthest and faintest sound takes possession of the vacuum. Even the barking of dogs and lowing of cattle is melodious. The jingling of the ice on the trees is sweet and liquid. I have heard a sweeter music

in some lone dale, where flowed a rill released by the noonday sun from its own frosty fetters, while the icicles were melting upon the apple trees, and the ever present chic-a-dee and nuthatch flitted about.

To this winter picture should be added — for it cannot be too often quoted — the lines which expand this thought of the domestic altar, lighted each morning in homage to the beneficent deities, and which adorn a picturesque page in "Walden": —

When the villagers were lighting their fires beyond the horizon, I too gave notice to the various wild inhabitants of Walden vale, by a smoky streamer from my chimney, that I was awake. —

> Light-winged Smoke, Icarian bird,
> Melting thy pinions in thy upward flight,
> Lark without song, and messenger of dawn,
> Circling above the hamlets as thy nest;
> Or else, departing dream, and shadowy form
> Of midnight vision, gathering up thy skirts;
> By night star-veiling, and by day
> Darkening the light and blotting out the sun;
> Go thou my incense upward from this hearth,
> And ask the gods to pardon this clear flame.

It was of this epigram that Emerson said, "His classic poem on 'Smoke' suggests Simonides, but is better than any poem of Simonides." Better than any extant epigram of Simonides, perhaps; but the quality which in that poet gave him his fame for capacity, would forbid ranking

Thoreau, with such fitful, unequal talent, beside the minstrel who wrote the epitaph for the Spartans at Thermopylæ.

Long after Thoreau's death, and some years after he had published his volume "Thoreau the Poet-Naturalist," by which Channing fastened on his friend the epithet that best describes him, Ellery Channing, then living with me, began one evening to talk about his dearest Henry, of whom he could but seldom bring himself to speak. Presently he came to the topic of the family industry (pencil-making at first, and finally preparing fine plumbago for the electrotypers), about which he had known a dozen years before I did; having resided in Concord after April, 1843, and having been from the first intimate with Emerson, Hawthorne, and Thoreau. It would be hard to say with which he was the most friendly, though in a different way with each. He said: —

This plumbago industry gave the Thoreaus control of a good mine in Canada, and they ground it in a mill of their own on the Fort Pond Brook in Acton. It was carried on by a process which Henry's father invented; there was some secret about it, and they kept persons away from the Acton mill, where the graphite was ground and mixed. All that was done in the home shop, attached to the house on the Main Street, was

to pack and box the article for transportation, after pencil-making ceased (about 1850). Henry managed the business during his father's last illness in 1859, and at his death in February, soon after Thomas Cholmondeley's second visit to Concord.[1]

He never gave up pencil-making because he had once made a perfect pencil (as Emerson declared) for he never did make a perfect pencil, nor say that he had. And he made and sold pencils long after the time when Mr. Emerson places that romance.

Land-surveying next became Henry's principal way of earning money for himself and his family; and it was industriously followed, in good weather or bad. All the household were industrious and frugal; Mrs. Thoreau was a good manager, who often had boarders, like Rowse the engraver, and Cholmondeley, and some of your students. Helen had been a teacher, and so was Sophia, was she not?

[1] After this business had been transferred by Sophia Thoreau, who carried it on for some years after her brother's death, I learned from the brothers Warren and Marshall Miles how much they netted from it. This appeared to have been between $1500 and $1800 a year. Probably the Thoreaus earned less — say from $1000 to $1500; but that sum, before the Civil War, would have gone far in support of a frugal Concord household. As already said, the first American John Thoreau had left to his family in 1801 about $25,000; but the care and breeding of his eight children consumed so much of it that the younger children never inherited much of this estate except the two houses in Boston and Concord, and the land adjacent. In one house, on the Village Square in Concord, they lived as a family; the other they leased and mortgaged from time to time, for many years. At the death of Sophia in 1876, and of her aunt Maria five years later, their united property was just about what the ancestor had bequeathed eighty years before.

THE THOREAUS' HOUSE ON MAIN STREET

Henry was very strict in money matters. He wrote something, as your book shows, for "Putnam's Magazine," as he had for "Graham's," and the "Boston Miscellany," edited by Nathan Hale, the brother of Edward and Charles Hale; and when he did not get prompt payment, he was much offended. He always insisted on being paid for the work he had done.

[Mrs. Sanborn.] That does not seem in keeping with his character. I thought he despised money, and did not work for that.

[Channing.] It was just what he did work for; he insisted on payment for everything he did, — land-surveying or whatever. Nobody could be stricter than he in requiring money when he worked for money.

Channing is also my authority for most of the statements that follow, in regard to matters that passed under his own eye: —

After Henry's return from Staten Island in November, 1843, he entered his father's shop for a time, and made pencils there in 1844. The shop was then at the end of a long out-building near the Parkman house; where the Library and Art-Gallery were to stand. It was not thought the proper thing to enter it or be too curious about it. The same was true of the large pencil-shop attached to the Thoreau-Alcott house in which Henry and his father and mother all died. That building was brought there in 1850, from the "Texas" house, which Henry and his father had built in 1844, and where the family lived for five or six years. The shop was built out of the timbers and boards of the Irish cabins of the

railroad builders on the Fitchburg line, when working through the "Deep Cut" of which Henry had so much to say in his Journals, and in "Walden." After the road was opened, the cabins were sold at auction by Sam Staples, the village auctioneer and sheriff; the materials were good and cheap. For the Texas house Henry dug and stoned the cellar with his own skilful hands, as he did afterwards for his hut by the Walden Cove. It stood on a back street south of the new railroad, and rather out of the way — hence playfully called "Texas."

The family left this hand-made home in August, 1850, for the larger house on the Main Street, and this was about the time when Channing, with his wife and young family, came down from

"His small cottage on the lonely hill"

(Ponkawtassett), where he was living when he sailed for Italy, and during Thoreau's abode at Walden. This residence near each other, from 1850 onward, brought the two friends much together in their daily walks, which nobody could describe better than Channing, for no one was so often Henry's companion, whether on land or water. A story characteristic of each was told me by a friend of the Thoreaus in 1895, while Channing was living with me and giving me many particulars of his long friendship with the

other Concord authors. Its date must have been 1843–44, while the Channings were living in a small red cottage on the Cambridge Turnpike near Emerson's garden and orchard: —

J. H., then a child of ten, perhaps, going home with her brother at noon from the village school to her home on the same Turnpike, and passing Mrs. Channing's cottage, was asked by the young wife to go through the woods to Walden, tell her husband that Mr. So-and-So had come up from Cambridge to make a call, and ask him to come home and meet him. The boy and girl soon reached Walden, where Thoreau and Channing were out in a boat. The boy shouted from the shore the message of Ellen Channing to her spouse; who made some indifferent reply. Thoreau, however, who understood the domestic proprieties and was scrupulous about them, turned his boat to the shore, and returned alone to the Emersons', where he was then living. He left word with Mrs. Channing that her husband would return soon. This was before he had built his hut at Walden.

In the gift copy of "Walden" which came to him from Thoreau, and from Channing to me (with some four thousand other books), the poet had made these entries: —

This engraving of the Walden hut is but a feeble caricature of the true house. It was moved in 1847–48, and still stands (in 1868). June 4 in that year Henry's house, next above Old Clarke's on the Deserted Road,

was abandoned by a new occupant of the place. I saw the posts hewn by Henry out of the pines that grew directly in its rear at Walden; and the old shanty boards put together by him with the old nails; and himself putting on the plaster, in the summer of 1845, twenty-three years ago. They had served Henry for only two of all these years; and for the rest had stood unknown and deserted on a by-road — only visited continually by myself. Such is fame.

The house stood and fronted there very much as at Walden. It was first bought and moved to the Lincoln road from its pine wood, by a non-compos, who thought he would live in it, but instead went to live at the Poor Farm near by.

Thoreau was indeed both a scholar and a man of affairs, supporting himself during his whole life by his own industry; and was never "aimless or listless," as some ignorant young critic may have fancied him. But had the hopes of his ancestry on either side — the mercantile, adventurous Thoreaus of Jersey, or the land-owning, fortune-seeking Jones family of the Old Colony — been crowned with success, and had a fortune of thousands come to this heir of those thwarted founders of a Boston family, as it did to his English friend in Shropshire, Thoreau might have fulfilled a dream of his youth; of which at the age of eight-and-twenty, he made

this record in his Journal for Saturday, August 23, 1845, during an afternoon in what is now the estate of one of the Adams families, at Baker Farm, lying on Fair Haven Bay: —

When on my way this afternoon, "Shall I go down this long hill in the rain to fish in the Fair Haven pond?" I ask myself. And I say to myself: "Yes, roam far, grasp life and conquer it! learn much and live! Your fetters are knocked off; you are really free. Stay till late in the night; be unwise and daring."

Again I remember — as I was leaving the Irishman's roof after the rain, and bending my steps again to the shore of Fair Haven Bay — my haste to catch pickerel, wading in retired meadows, in sloughs and bogholes, in remote and savage places, seemed for an instant trivial to me, who had been sent to school and college.

But then, in an instant, my Genius said from the western heaven: "Go fish and hunt far and wide, day by day; and rest thee by many hearthsides without misgiving! Rise free from care before the dawn, and seek adventures! Let the noon find thee by other brooks, and the night overtake thee always at home. Lead such a life as the children that chase butterflies in the meadow.

"There are no larger fields than these, no nobler games, no more extended earth. With thy life uninsured, live free and forever as you were planned. Grow wild according to Nature, like these ferns and brakes, which study not morals nor philosophy; nor strive to

become a cultivated grass for cattle to eat; or like these bulrushes, behind which you see the reddening sky over the lake, as if they were the masts of vessels in a crowded Venice harbor.

"Let the thunder rumble in thy own tongue; what if it brings rain to farmers' crops? that is not its errand to thee. Take shelter under the cloud, while others fly to carts and sheds. Enjoy thy dominion, and waive men, the fowl and the quadruped, and all creeping things. Seek without toil thy daily food; thy sustenance, is it not in nature? Through want of confidence in the gods men are where they are; buying and selling, owning land, following trade, — and spending their lives ignobly."

This was a counsel of perfection for the "superior man" to follow — that person of whom Thoreau often spoke, and whom he in some important ways represented in this corner of the habitable world. He could have been trusted to traverse the whole world, a "pilgrim of Eternity," as Shelley rather prematurely styled his friend Byron; and he would not have misused his opportunities as Byron did. Thoreau was the servant of moral principle, not of caprice.

His occupation as land-surveyor was exactly the same as that which Hector St. John pursued at times, in his quarter-century's life in Colonial America, before he returned to his father's house

in Normandy and resumed natural relations with his native France. In several points there is a resemblance between the two writers; in others the widest unlikeness. Both were lovers of Nature and an outdoor life; both were philanthropists, though Thoreau disowned the name; both came into popularity by a single book, which the twentieth century is now reading for St. John, as the eighteenth did; while the nineteenth century gradually forgot St. John, when it was learning to admire Thoreau. Both were mercantile in their methodical habits, and both had that native and occasional elegance which French descent seems to carry with it. But Thoreau was all his life training for literature; while St. John was turning away from it, in despite of his talents and tastes in that direction.

In land-surveying Thoreau was merely making that his business which had been his pleasure. It kept him in the pastures, woods, and fields, and exercised that mechanical skill which, like Alcott, he had by nature and training, while it was denied to the other Concord authors. Surveying gave Thoreau companions in his outdoor life — landowners and chainbearers, as well as the hunters and fishermen and woodcutters in whom his heart delighted; and whom he certainly did not

"disdain," as Whitman thought he held the whole race of man in contempt. It was a form of censure often misapplied to the Transcendentalists. The wife of George Ripley, the founder of Brook Farm, while he was pastor of a Boston church, wrote to one of her friends, before Emerson left the pulpit, saying, "Waldo Emerson was here yesterday, preaching for George — *with his chin in the air, in scorn of the whole human race.*"

It was misjudgment in such instances — an effect of manner rather than want of heart; something like that alleged account of Carlyle by Emerson, when he returned from England in 1848. "He sits in his fourth-story study and *sneers*," was the reply said to have been made to one who inquired of Emerson what his friend Carlyle was doing at Chelsea.

In whatever active pursuit Thoreau engaged, he gave his close attention to it; and followed the Yankee injunction "Mind your own business" with assiduity. Orford, near Dartmouth College, bred a yeoman who was driving his oxen with a haycart into that village, when it was still a small college town — without his shoes and stockings. An inquisitive or supercilious college professor, meeting him, said, "Do the folks over in Orford all go barefooted?" "Wal," was the sedate an-

swer, "some on 'em doos — and the rest on 'em minds their own business." Something of this Yankee character was certainly in Thoreau, along with that high-spirited turn of mind that in youth would have taken him roaming, like a gypsy or an English lord, wandering at will over the ecumenical earth. The "superior man" is wont to be of two or three natures, and to consult his own will about his own conduct. Such, at any rate, was Henry Thoreau, in his active pursuits.

CHAPTER XI

THOREAU AS AUTHOR IN PROSE AND VERSE

"WALDEN" has thus far been, and perhaps will always be, Thoreau's best-read book, — though he is now represented in literature and biography by more than thirty volumes, all containing samples of his sententious, humorous, and paradoxical wisdom. First in date, though unpublished until he had been forty years in his grave, is the little book which he named "The Service," and left incomplete. For it is evident that he meant to make it a manual for the spiritual Soldier, such as he hoped himself to be, and to find fit comrades, if but few, among his contemporaries. Walt Whitman, who seems now to be held in some such estimation by a numerous and increasing class of followers, and with whom three of the Concord authors had a slight but agreeable acquaintance, thought he had found the weak spot in Thoreau's armor as a Recruit, and said to his friend Traubel: —

> His great fault was disdain for men, — for Tom, Dick and Harry; inability to appreciate the average life, even the exceptional life. It seemed to me a want

of imagination. He could not put his life into any other life, or realize why one man was so, and another man was not so; was impatient with other people. It was a surprise to me to meet in Thoreau such a case of superciliousness.

This was a misapprehension by Whitman, whom I knew well. Thoreau's disdain was as much for himself as for the man in the street; it was his way of speaking that was at fault. The best of his poems are free from this blemish, which we must admit it was, in a certain sense. Emerson recognized it and sometimes spoke of it; though he usually overlooked it, in the bright light of Thoreau's better qualities. He touched on it in his early acquaintance with Charles Malloy, one of the gentlest and most receptive of Emerson's rustic disciples, and a good interpreter of the Master to other followers. To Ellery Channing, much later, Emerson said: —

Longfellow and Lowell have not appreciated Thoreau as a thinker and writer; and Judge Hoar has confirmed them in their skepticism. Henry makes an instant impression, one way or the other. He met Cholmondeley in my house, who was at once pleased with his nonchalant manner; and his admiration grew greater by daily contact. Thoreau did not at first appreciate his Shropshire friend, but came to value him highly.

"Walden" deals far less in paradoxes than does "The Service," and much more with the plain facts of Nature and human nature, which Thoreau quite profoundly understood. He omitted much of the matter he had collected, at Walden and long before that, when finally making selections for its publication. I happen to have seen the final "revise" of the first edition of "Walden" in 1854, which is now, like most of the Walden manuscripts, among the treasures of Mr. Bixby at St. Louis. In correcting the proof carefully, Thoreau first criticised the cut of his cabin drawn by his sister Sophia. He must have noticed that her trees were firs and not pines, with a few deciduous trees that did not then grow there; but it did not disturb him. He wished to have the hut just right, and wrote: —

> I would suggest a little alteration, chiefly in the door, in the wide projection of the roof at the front; and that the bank more immediately about the house be brought out more distinctly.

On page 58 he made an odd note, changing 70 to 90 cents, in the railroad fare to Fitchburg, adding at the bottom, "They have raised the fares within a week."

Among "dead matter," on page 274, is a pas-

SOPHIA THOREAU

sage on architecture from the "Lay of the Last Minstrel" beginning —

> "The keystone that locked each ribbèd aisle."

It had no special pertinence, but is mentioned here as showing that Thoreau had read Scott, which hardly appears elsewhere.

From the same proof, this mystical passage was dropped in revision: —

> If we traverse the earth, we shall discover no institution which Friendship has established. It has no temple, no column. It governs nowhere. It is as a thing unheard of; if you inquire of it, you may not hear. It has no gallery, no school, no church. It is not recognized in any creed, nor by any religion. The wisest books of the ancient world — the Scriptures even — do not contain its code, nor inculcate its maxims.
>
> Why will we always be trading and never conclude a bargain? There goes a rumor that the earth is inhabited; but not yet have we seen a footprint on the shore. How very remotely allied to us are our brothers and sisters!

It is hard to see the reason for omitting many things in printing the "Walden" manuscripts. Why, for instance, should the last dying speech of Tom Hyde the tinker have been shortened? "Tom added, 'You Boston folks and Roxbury people will want Tom Hyde to mend your kettles.'" The passage was in the Journal of 1849

(p. 383), which no longer exists. Can Tom have been an early imported English gypsy, like him who in New Hampshire founded the family of Leathers, celebrated by Whittier, of whom one illustrious descendant was Henry Wilson, who became Vice-President of the United States?

With all his natural history, in "Walden" and elsewhere, Thoreau appears averse from science. Channing tried to explain this: —

I have known so many and so long studies of his over his admired birds, that I was surprised to hear him decry the usual method of studying them. It was connected with his dislike of Science in general. For instance; a very well-known savant had spent many years in looking at the eggs of bats, beetles, frogs, and the like, to find how they begin and end; he printed an enormous book about Turtles. Here was a case in point. If there was a subject with which Henry was familiar, it was Turtles. He had spent days and nights in watching them; had caught them, hatched them, noted down on the spot the whole process of laying their eggs, — and probably knew more about this creature, as it appears in the mud-puddles and to men's eyes, than all the titled naturalists in Massachusetts. But in this great microscopic folio, after reading it, he told me he did not find one single, solitary hint or word as to the habits or life of any species of turtle, any more than if he who wrote it had never seen a specimen of that reptile.

I do not think he relished Science in long words. To pry into Nature, to steal her fine secrets with a series of skilfully ground watch-glasses, was not agreeable to Thoreau. He was not the thing Wordsworth calls

> "Philosopher! a fingering slave,
> One that would peep and botanize
> Upon his mother's grave."

He loved Nature in the lump. He had the filial feeling, the veneration of a son for his mother. He thought she had her veils, which should be respected; that we should not too narrowly pry, nor too much anatomize.

He was not a believer in the things he did not know about. With the Christian Church and its fatalities it fared no better than with the medical men. When he was once ill and suffering, I said, in my way, — not always serious, — "You will need a father-confessor." He replied, "I have nothing to confess." For the doctors he had compassion; he looked on them as deluded; but not so with the clergy. His trouble with the priests was that they were not alone ignorant of the oracles, but ignorant of their ignorance, — the most fatal of all delusions, says Coleridge. The priests read out of a book detailing the acts of a Jewish youth, poor, ill-fed, without even a fox-hole to crawl to; while their building was the most costly in the village.

These peculiarities of his friend were carefully noted by Channing. On a point that has been far too much dwelt on, he said to me: —

In Emerson's mode of writing out from his Journals, Thoreau imitated him; and yet there was no such thing

as conscious imitation in him. His handwriting, too, had such a resemblance to Emerson's that I could hardly tell them apart. It was very strange; for Henry never imitated anybody. There was nothing but originality in him, as I know from my many hours with him. In all my walks with Emerson, — not less than a thousand, — I seldom heard him mention a person by name. He had singular titles for Thoreau and others, and avoided their personal appellation. Henry had usually the same habit; nor did he reply directly to any observation or question of mine, but went on with original remarks of his own. He had the habit not to dwell on the past. He rarely read a book over twice, and he loved not to repeat a story after its first freshness. His talent was vigorous, onward, in the moment, — which was perfectly filled; and then he went to the next with great speed.

He took daily walks to the post-office after the death of his father, three years before his own; this for the benefit of the family, for he was a martinet in the family service. He had three varieties of boots for winter walking, one of ten-pound India-rubber size, in which he seemed lost. In summer he used low shoes, coarse and substantial, with nails in the toes, and leathern strings, tied in a "hard knot."

It must not be considered that Channing is infallible, though he is so good a witness — the best of the single witnesses in Thoreau's case — as to matters of fact. Matters of opinion are variable; the same witness has not always held

to the same opinion. What Thoreau said himself about his extravagance of remark, when Channing was his interlocutor, is worth citing: —

My companion tempts me to certain licenses of speech, i.e. to reckless and sweeping expressions which I am wont to regret that I have used. That is, I find that I have used more harsh, extravagant, and cynical expressions concerning mankind and individuals than I intended. I find it difficult to make to him a sufficiently moderate statement. I think it is because I have not his sympathy in my sober and constant view. He asks for a paradox, an eccentric statement, and too often I give it to him.[1]

At this date he was sending his "copy" for "Walden" to the printer. A few days later (March 31) he wrote: —

In criticising your writing, trust your fine instinct. There are many things which we come very near questioning, but do not question. When I have sent off my manuscripts to the printer, certain objectionable sentences or expressions are sure to obtrude themselves on my attention with force, though I had not consciously suspected them before. My critical instinct then at once breaks the ice and comes to the surface.

It was a very acute appreciation by Channing which made him say of Thoreau that his task was

[1] Journal of March 12, 1854.

to show the *multum* in the *parvo*, — "to boil up the little into the big." But this may have been caught from an expression of Thoreau's own, uttered in that last year, 1861, when he felt the shadow of death creeping over him, but was still equal to a walk with his dear friend: "To elevate the little into the great is genius." Quoting this, Channing says: "I remember well the exact spot where he said this. He was then in his last sickness, and said that he could never feel warm." In the next year (1862), when these much prized walks must be given up, and Thoreau was confined to the house, except as some friend's carriage took him for a short drive, Channing records this:—

> He said to me once, standing at the window, — "I cannot see on the outside at all. We thought ourselves great philosophers in those wet days when we used to go out and sit down by the wall-sides." This was absolutely all he was ever heard to say of that outward world during his illness; neither could a stranger in the least infer that he had ever a friend in wood or field.

Among the papers left to me by Channing, who died in my house, where he had long lived as one of my family, I found an unfinished Journal, kept for some months, five years after Thoreau's death,

which recorded chiefly his lonely rambles where he had walked with Henry, and the reflections his reading and observation gave him; as if he were seeking to follow that patient example in journalizing each day's experience. In this manuscript Channing wrote: —

> Henry once said, speaking of some minute thing, that "the art of genius was to raise the little into the large." It was one of the last times we were out together, near Flint's Bridge. How far it was from true is another matter. He had a taste for exaggeration that was remarkable. He loved to wonder; and the more usual the matter was, the more he wondered. He exaggerated the little; made much out of nothing almost; and had a way of always being surprised at things that were certain to come. Henry thought and said a great deal about the coming of the first bluebird, the piping of the hylas, the appearance of the turtle and the first plants. He could never sufficiently wonder at these things. But the thing that occurs twice is not wonderful.

Whether a customary thing is wonderful or not, depends on the person wondering. To Thoreau life was a daily miracle; he admired the repetition which did not quite reproduce the previous experience, and yet blissfully recalled it; as we may take pleasure in a remembered strain of music, heard from a new performer. Mere repetition is happi-

ness to a child; and Thoreau had retained, far beyond most men, the sensibility of childhood to the events of Nature. "He exaggerated the permanence of everything but what men do," said a friend. "A picture, a novel, a piece of music did not affect him in that fashion. This was his special trait, and as pleasing as possible to his companion."

Behind and beyond all his jests and paradoxes was his sincere love of a simple life, freed from the encumbrances which he found all about him, even in the comparatively simple surroundings of Concord, where most of his thoughtful days were spent. He early found the work he had to do — to investigate Nature under the light of idealism, and to report what he saw. Edward Hoar, who rambled much with him when a boy, and in later years went with him to the Maine woods and to Mount Washington, said of him to me: —

Realism in description was Henry's great forte; in that respect I compare him to Dante. Emerson sees through other men's eyes; Thoreau always with his own eyes, and makes his own description. Also, he had inherited a French mind and mode of writing, with an elegance seldom found in American authors.[1]

[1] Edward Hoar was one of three brothers, in age between Judge Rockwood Hoar, his elder, and G. F. Hoar, the younger, both more publicly known; but in Nature-study and literary appreciation excelling both. Elizabeth was their sister.

We are apt to speak of persons whom we admire for firmness and courage as of Roman or of Spartan mould. Occasionally a person so recalls the "sweetness and light" of the best Grecian types that we call him "a true Greek." Such was Charles Emerson in the early poem of Dr. Holmes; and such, in some aspects, was Bronson Alcott. Thoreau, of all the Concord authors most familiar with Greek and Roman literature, had close relations with several of the philosophers of antiquity. In his constant practice and inculcation of the simple life, he resembled Socrates; and equally in his moral courage and his love of gossip. But there were likewise points of resemblance to the Cynic Diogenes, and to the greater Stoics; so that Emerson chose to consider him as a Stoic and little else — a classification his family would not accept. In the mass of his character he was best depicted by Channing, in a poem ("Near Home") written at Concord, Plymouth, New Bedford, and other haunts of the two friends, and dedicated to Thoreau: —

> "Henry! though with thy name a nobler verse
> Might fitlier blend, inspire and lead the way
> To more sublime emotions, that entrance
> The listening city and the landward town, —
> Still let thy name stand here, — of one the name
> Who to no meaner service nobly walked
> Than Virtue's service.

Modest, mild and kind,
Who never spurned the needing from thy door, —
(Door of thy heart, which is a palace gate;)
Temperate and faithful, in whose word the world
Might trust, sure to repay; unvexed by care,
Unawed by Fortune's nod, slave to no lord,
Nor coward to thy peers; long shalt thou live!
Not in this feeble verse, this sleeping age, —
But in the roll of Heaven, and at the bar
Of that high court where Virtue is in place."

This prediction of sixty years ago is now amply fulfilled.

But what title had Thoreau or Alcott, or even Emerson, to be called philosophers? Many who call themselves by that name have denied it to these three; and some have been unwilling to allow that they were poets. Poetical they admit, but not poets; wise, in odd ways and at odd times, but philosophers — never! Perish the thought! they had no system, they developed no dialectic, they were ignorant of metaphysics. But they were Lovers of Wisdom, which the Greek term signifies. And what is Wisdom? An ancient book, debarred from general reading, by calling it "apocryphal," thus defines it: —

Wisdom knoweth things of old, and doth conjecture what is to come; she hath the subtilties of speech, and can expound dark sentences; she foreseeth signs and

wonders, and the event of seasons and ages; she teacheth temperance and forethought, justice and fortitude; than which men can have in their life nothing more profitable.

In this way the Concord authors earned and merited the name of philosophers. Truth comes by insight and in flashes; it is a datum and not a logical inference. You can afterward connect its elements by the steps of a syllogism, or a score of syllogisms; but that is a concession to human frailty; it came at first from that mystical Wisdom celebrated in our Apocrypha. Thoreau, apart from his recognition of this source, had also in Aristotelean strictness a more practical and every-day means of verifying his data. He was a better geometer than Plato or Pythagoras, and as good an observer as any of the ancients.

The copious Journals, now printed nearly in full, so far as preserved, are an invaluable record, not only of events and observations, but of character. They disclose varying moods, but one fixed and unchanging character, of a very high order. They show, too, how his forms of expression changed, and what a deep insight he had into human nature. With a spirit essentially poetic, he lacked the constant sensibility to rhythmical form, which persons much less poetical often have

and employ. His first verse printed (in the "Dial") was that confession of love for Ellen Sewall, the mention of which found very late access to his biographies — partly because the earliest Journals and poems were destroyed by Thoreau himself. Like much of his poesy, it is too long, and with stanzas of very unequal merit; but here are some of the best: —

Lately, alas, I knew a gentle boy,
  Whose features all were cast in Virtue's mould,
As one she had designed for Beauty's toy,
  But after manned him for her own stronghold.

On every side he open was as day,
  That you might see no lack of strength within,
For walls and ports do only serve alway
  For a pretence to feebleness and sin.

Say not that Cæsar was victorious,
  With toil and strife who stormed the House of Fame,
In other sense this youth was glorious, —
  Himself a kingdom wheresoe'er he came.

He forayed like the subtile haze of Summer,
  That stilly shows fresh landscape to the eyes,
And revolutions works without a murmur,
  Or rustling of a leaf beneath the skies.

So was I taken unawares by this,
  I quite forgot my homage to confess;
Yet now am forced to know, though hard it is,
  I might have loved him, had I loved him less.

Each moment as we nearer drew to each,
A stern respect withheld us farther yet;
So that we seemed beyond each other's reach,
And less acquainted than when first we met.

Eternity may not the chance repeat,
But I must tread my single way alone,
In sad remembrance that we once did meet,
And know that bliss irrevocably gone.

The spheres henceforth my elegy shall sing,
For elegy has other subject none;
Each strain of music in my ears shall ring
Knell of departure from that other one.

Is't then too late the damage to repair?
Distance, forsooth, from my weak grasp hath reft
The empty husk, and clutched the useless tare,
But in my hands the wheat and kernel left.

If I but love that virtue which he is,
Though it be scented in the morning air,
Still shall we be truest acquaintances,
Nor mortals know a sympathy more rare.

On the testimony of both Emerson and Theodore Parker, and of other persons who knew the facts, this "gentle boy" was Miss Ellen Sewall, then of Scituate, where her father was the village pastor, — a first cousin of Mrs. Alcott, and a descendant of the old Puritan justice Samuel Sewall, and also a granddaughter of Mrs. Colonel Ward, intimate in the Thoreau family. Her aunt, Miss

Prudence Ward, writing to her sister, Mrs. Sewall, at Scituate (June 29, 1838), said: —

> Mr. Thoreau's potatoes and squashes [at the Parkman house] look finely, and Henry's melons are flourishing. He has over sixty hills, and we are likely to have an abundance. John's school is flourishing; there are four boys from Boston boarding with us. I want Ellen Sewall should make us a visit of a week or two. Tell little Mary Ward that we have a little black kitten, and that the martins have driven away the bluebirds and taken possession of their box. Our flower-garden looks very gay. It is more forward than our neighbors', and filled with a variety of roses and other flowers.

Into this summer paradise came the fair Ellen, and her brother, Edmund Quincy Sewall, who became a pupil of John and Henry Thoreau, in the school already described. Both the brothers fell in love with her, but John seems to have been her favorite. He was a gentler person then, and more acceptable, both as teacher and lover, than the more assertive Henry. She remained unwedded until after John's death, early in 1842, but afterwards became the wife of a clergyman, Rev. Joseph Osgood, preaching at Cohasset near Scituate. The Thoreaus continued to visit her, and at Sophia's death she left Mrs. Osgood a legacy.

No other love affair of Henry's is on record, and he may be supposed to have withdrawn his

suit to the fair maid, in deference to his elder brother, whom he dearly loved. Channing, who must have known of this episode in the youth of his friend, wrote in his Journal of March, 1867, this passage: —

Henry was fond of making an ado, a wonder, a surprise, of all facts that took place out of doors; but a picture, a piece of music, a novel, did not affect him in that fashion. This trait of exaggeration was as pleasing as possible to his companions. Nothing was more delightful than the enormous curiosity, the effervescing wonder, of this child of Nature — glad of everything its mother said or did. This joy in Nature is something we can get over, like love. And yet love, — that is a hard toy to smash and fling under the grate, for good. But Henry made no account at all of love, apparently; he had notions about friendship.

It was under friendship alone that must be classed those charming verses that he addressed

To the Maiden in the East

Low in the eastern sky
Is set thy glancing eye;
And though its gracious light
Ne'er rises to my sight,
Yet every star that climbs
Above the gnarled limbs
Of yonder hill [1]
Conveys thy gentle will.

[1] Bare Hill by Walden.

Believe I knew thy thought,
And that the zephyrs brought
Thy kindest wishes through,
As mine they bear to you;
That some attentive cloud
Did pause amid the crowd
Above my head,
While gentle things were said.

Believe the thrushes sung,
And that the flower-bells rung;
That herbs exhaled their scent,
And beasts knew what was meant;
The trees a welcome waved,
And lakes their margins laved,
When thy free mind
To my retreat did wind.

It was a summer eve,
The air did gently heave,
While yet a low-hung cloud
Thine eastern skies did shroud:
The lightning's silent gleam,
Startling my drowsy dream,
Seemed like the flash
Under thy dark eyelash.

From yonder comes the sun;
But soon his course is run,
Rising to trivial day
Along his dusty way;
But thy noontide completes
Only auroral heats,
Nor ever sets,
To hasten vain regrets.

Direct thy pensive eye
Into the western sky,
And when the evening star
Doth glimmer from afar,
Upon the mountain line,
Accept it for a sign
That I am near,
And thinking of thee here.

I'll be thy Mercury,
Thou Cytherea to me;
Distinguished by thy face,
The Earth shall learn my place;
As here beneath thy light
Will I outwear the night,
With mingled ray
Leading the westward way.

Still will I strive to be
As if thou wert with me;
Whatever path I take,
It shall be, for thy sake,
Of gentle slope and wide,
As thou wert by my side,
Without a root
To trip thy gentle foot.

I'll walk with quiet pace,
And choose the smoothest place;
And careful dip the oar,
And shun the winding shore;
And gently steer my boat
Where water-lilies float,
And cardinal flowers
Stand in their sylvan bowers.

This was plainly written at Walden, after Miss Russell had returned to Plymouth, her home, whence she had visited Concord to reside with her Plymouth neighbor Mrs. Waldo Emerson. She soon after married Marston Watson, and became for many years the hostess at Hillside, where the Concord circles frequently visited. For his friend Watson, Thoreau surveyed the park and orchards in that sylvan retreat, where Alcott carried the surveyor's chain, and even planned a cottage for his own family there, after his own Concord "Hillside" was sold to Hawthorne in 1852, and took its new name of "Wayside."

These astronomical loves of Henry and Mary remind one of the "vegetable loves" of Andrew Marvell, who wrote,—to one of the Fairfaxes, perchance: —

> "Our vegetable loves should grow
> Vaster than empires and more slow;
> .....I would
> Love you ten years before the Flood,
> And you should, if you please, refuse
> Till the Conversion of the Jews."

The quarterly "Dial" for four years, and the Concord Lyceum for twenty-five, gave publication to Thoreau's writings in his journeyman years of literature; but his first volume, the "Week," came out, at his own expense, in 1849.

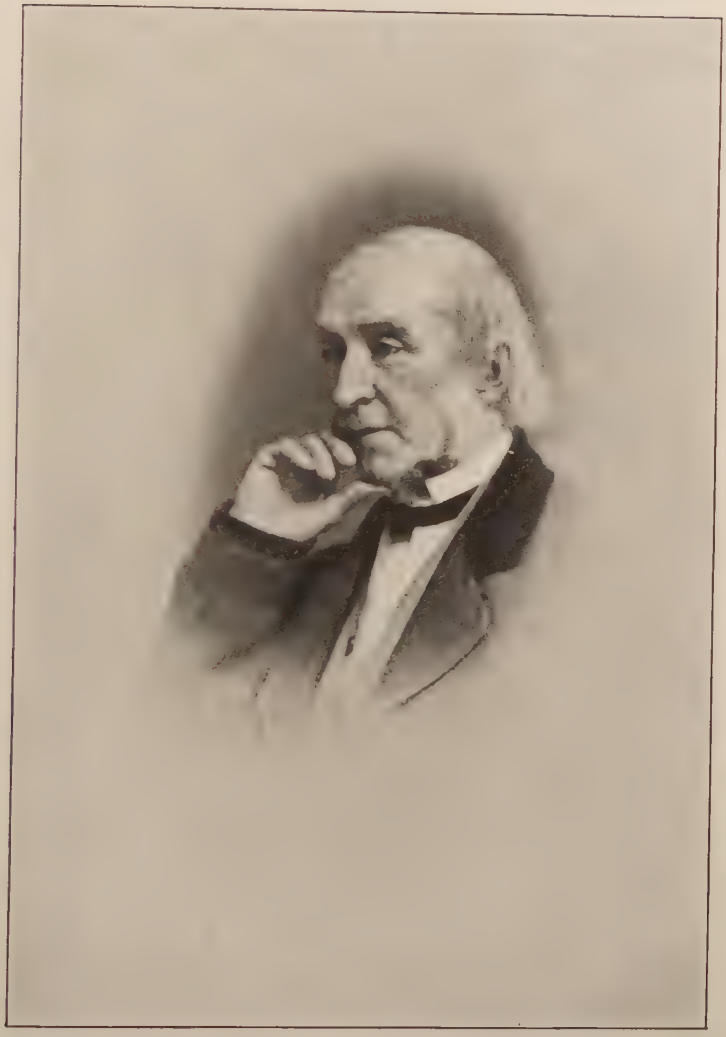
Neither "The Service" nor the "Raleigh" got into the "Dial," for which they were written; but the latter was heard as a lecture at the Lyceum in 1843, as much of the "Week" and of "Walden" was so heard from 1838 to 1850. By 1850 he had become a contributor to several magazines for very small pay; and, through his acquaintance with Horace Greeley, was a contributor to the "Tribune" occasionally, as Margaret Fuller had been for some years, till her shipwreck near New York in 1850. Thoreau represented Emerson and Mrs. Channing, Margaret's sister, in the search for the bodies and the effects at Fire Island, after that tragedy. Writing to Marcus Spring at Eagleswood, New Jersey (July 23, 1850), Emerson gave this testimonial to Thoreau's competence at such crises: —

At first I thought I would go myself, and see if I could help in the inquiries at the wrecking-ground, and act for the friends. But I have prevailed on my friend, Mr. Thoreau, to go for me and all the friends. He is the most competent person that could be selected; and in the dispersion of the Fuller family, and our uncertainty how to communicate with them, he is authorized by Mr. Ellery Channing to act for them all. He is prepared to spend a number of days in this object, and you must give him any guidance or help you can. If his money does not hold out, I shall gladly pay any drafts

he may make on you in my name. And I shall cordially unite with you in any expense that this painful calamity shall make necessary.

Soon after this first break in the circle of the Concord Transcendentalists, the system of public lectures became so general in New England that Thoreau received invitations to read his essays in other towns than Concord; and even Channing tried his fortune as a lecturer. He already had tried it as a journalist in Boston, Cincinnati, and New York. Thoreau heard him in Concord, and gave this sketch of it (January 29, 1852): —

I heard Channing lecture to-night. It was a bushel of nuts. Perhaps the most original lecture I ever heard. Ever so unexpected, not to be foretold, and so sententious that you could not look at him and take his thought at the same time. You had to give your undivided attention to the thoughts, for you were not assisted by set phrases or modes of speech intervening. It was all genius, no talent. For, well as I know C., he more than any man disappoints my expectation. When I see him in the desk, hear him, I cannot realize that I ever saw him before. He will be strange, unexpected, to his best acquaintance. I cannot associate the lecturer with the companion of my walk. The lecture was full of wise, acute, and witty observations, yet most of the audience did not know but it was mere incoherent and reckless verbiage and nonsense.



WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING

This lecture of Channing's was given at the Concord Lyceum, of which Thoreau had long ceased to be "Curator," as he had been at the time of the controversy over Phillips, but where he lectured gratuitously every winter, giving there, and at Salem and elsewhere, chapters from the record of his life at Walden, before the book itself was printed. Among its manuscript pages I found some that had served for his readings before audiences.

It was the golden age of lyceum lectures when almost every town in New England had its lectures by famous authors. Ellery Channing, who belonged to a family famed for public eloquence, had avoided its practice; but this winter he set himself resolutely to train for a popular lecturer, with very scanty success. His correspondence with Emerson, which I have, tells the brief tale. He had several lectures written out, the manuscripts of which he left to me, among his other papers. Writing to Emerson at various dates in February, 1852 (1, 7, 10, and 17), he gives the record of his attempts and failures. He read in Boston, Providence, Worcester, Fall River, Plymouth, and possibly Greenfield. From Providence, where he had Charles Newcomb and Mrs. Sarah Whitman for friends, he wrote Emerson:—

I am reading my lectures in Providence to full houses (bating accidents); the receipts of my last being $1, — or barring one Quarter, which was a twenty-cent piece. I am going to Fall River to-day, and may read there, if the individuals are as great as they are here. Mrs. Whitman told me at ten last night, that I am exactly like yourself — like by the very gait, air, voice, turning of the eyebrow, etc. Here's a flea in your ear, with your one auditor planting such a side-blow as that! To be a mere wretched imitator of you — to have written some bad lectures, and then read them with your voice, air, tone, etc.! It is really a trick of fortune, or of fate, I did not in the least look out for. I am usually content to believe that I am not a mimic; but this woman is clear-sighted and superior; and the case must be undoubtedly as she says. What am I to do about it? I think I shall have to give up lecturing, and betake myself to

"Some hermit's shady cell."

One more course on my account will teach me how to read lectures — any lectures. The money cost is considerable; but never having been to college, or spent a sixpence on my education, I thought I must do this. I had no way to learn how to read but to read. To wait for an invitation? I have waited precisely ten years now.

Mrs. Whitman thinks there is too much thought in my first lecture. Thoreau did too. But I have omitted almost one half already. This seems enough for a beginning.

He never repeated the experiment.

In that same winter Thoreau had a different lecturer to deal with at the same Lyceum, when Mrs. Elizabeth Oakes Smith, in the last night of 1851, gave a discourse on "Womanhood." Parson Frost, of the First Parish, a good man who heard her, did not like what she said about the clergy; "It was too transcendental for me." Thoreau was more specific: —

The most important fact was that a woman said it; in that respect it was suggestive. My interview added nothing to the previous impression, rather subtracted. She was a woman in the too common sense after all. You had to substitute courtesy for sense and argument. It requires nothing less than a chivalric feeling to sustain a conversation with a lady. I carried her lecture for her in my pocket wrapped in her handkerchief; my pocket exhales cologne to this moment.

A little before this (November 13) he had called on Miss Mary Emerson (aunt of Waldo), then seventy-seven, and spent two hours; she was very different: —

The wittiest and most vivacious woman that I know, whom it is most profitable to meet, the least frivolous, who will the most surely provoke to good conversation and the expression of what is in you. She is singular in being really and perseveringly interested to know what thinkers think. In spite of her own biases, she can

entertain a large thought with hospitality. . . . Reading from my manuscripts to her, and using the word "god" in perchance a merely heathenish sense, she inquired hastily in a tone of dignified anxiety, "Is that god spelt with a little *g*?" Fortunately it was. (I had brought in the word "god" without any solemnity of voice or connection.) So I went on as if nothing had happened.

This fruitful winter, also, he made the acquaintance of a younger sage whom he admired: —

They showed me little Johnny Riordan, as bright a boy of five years as ever trod our paths, whom you could not see for five minutes without loving and honoring him. He had on, in the middle of January of the coldest winter we have had for twenty years, one thickness only of ragged cloth sewed on to his pantaloons over his little shirt, and shoes with large holes in the toes, into which the snow got, as he was obliged to confess, he who had trodden five winters under his feet. Thus clad, he walked a mile to school every day, over the bleakest of railroad causeways — all to get learning and warmth, and there sit at the head of his bench. These clothes, with countless patches, which had for vehicle — O shame, shame! — pantaloons that had been mine, they whispered to me, set as if his mother had fitted them to a tea-kettle first. He revived to my mind the grave nobility and magnanimity of ancient heroes.

A little out of date, but worthy to be included here, are verses sent in as a Rhapsody by Thoreau

for the "Dial," — never published, but endorsed by Emerson, from whom they came to me, "H. D. Thoreau, 1843."

The Just Made Perfect

A stately music rises on my ear,
Borne on the breeze from some adjacent vale;
A host of knights, my own true ancestors,
Tread to the lofty strains and pass away
In long procession; to this music's sound
The Just move onward in deep serried ranks,
With looks serene of hope, and gleaming brows,
As if they were the temples of the Day.

Gilt by an unseen sun's resplendent ray
They firmly move, sure as the lapse of Time;
Departed worth, leaving these trivial fields
Where sedate valor finds no worthy aim,
And still is Fame the noblest cause of all.

Forward they press and with exalted eye,
As if their road, which seems a level plain,
Did still ascend, and were again subdued
'Neath their proud feet. Forward they move, and leave
The sun and moon and stars alone behind:
And now, by the still fainter strains, I know
They surely pass; and soon their quivering harp,
And faintly clashing cymbal, will have ceased
To feed my ear.

It is the steadiest motion eye hath seen,
A Godlike progress; e'en the hills and rocks

Do forward come, so to congratulate
Their feet; the rivers eddy backward, and
The waves recurl to accompany their march.

Onward they move, like to the life of man,
Which cannot rest, but goes without delay
Right to the gates of Death, not losing time
In its majestic tread to Eternity,
As if Man's blood, a river, flowed right on
Far as the eye could reach, to the Heart of hearts,
Nor eddied round about these complex limbs.

'T is the slow march of life, — I feel the feet
Of tiny drops go pattering through *my* veins;
Their arteries flow with an Assyrian pace,
And empires rise and fall beneath their stride.

Still, as they move, flees the horizon wall;
The low-roofed sky o'erarches their true path;
For they have caught at last the pace of Heaven,
Their great Commander's true and timely tread.

Lo! how the sky before them is cast up
Into an archèd road, like to the gallery
Of the small mouse that bores the meadow's turf:
Chapels of ease swift open o'er the path,
And domes continuous span the lengthening way.

It will be seen that this mystical poem is a kind of sequel to the long unpublished "Service," which Goodspeed printed in 1902. Why it did not appear in the "Dial" I cannot say; there are defects in its poetic form, which may

have seemed reason enough with Emerson for withholding it; or it may only have been overlooked by him, as it was by me when furnishing Mr. Salt with the verses in my possession for the London edition of Thoreau's "Poems." I have slightly corrected some of these defects; and I have broken it up into stanzas in copying, — not always with deference to Thoreau's punctuation, though that was commonly very exact, except that he overworked the comma, without sufficient recourse to the colon and semicolon, or the comma and dash. In date it is three years later than "The Service," and when Thoreau had much given up writing verse. When he told me that he had destroyed many verses because Emerson said they were not good, he then said, "Perhaps they were better than Emerson thought them." Like other mystics, Thoreau is hard to follow and comprehend.

CHAPTER XII

THE JOURNEYINGS OF THOREAU

Though twice invited by friends to visit Europe (by Isaac Hecker, when both were young, and by Thomas Cholmondeley in later years), Thoreau never crossed the Atlantic, nor left his native land except for a brief tour in Canada. Yet he was, like St. Paul, whom he did not otherwise much resemble, "in journeyings often," and that from infancy. Born in Concord, he removed to Chelmsford, then to Boston, and back to Concord Village, before he was six years old. He remembered the first time his infant eyes rested on Walden Pond, when he thought to his little self that he should like to live there — as he afterwards did. He made short journeys with his father and his brother John before leaving Harvard College; and the brothers planned a journey to Kentucky together the next year after graduating; but Henry changed his mind, and visited his cousins in Maine, instead. He was then in search of some school to teach, as Bronson Alcott had been, at a younger age, when with his cousin, William Alcott, he went sailing off

from New Haven to South Carolina. Thoreau, more wisely, decided to stay in Concord, and do his schoolkeeping there for a few years; meanwhile, to make himself more familiar with the region of his birth before journeying extensively elsewhere. This he did in daily walks. His voyage on the two rivers in 1839 was his first introduction to mountains; for the two brothers left their home-made boat at Hooksett, and spent most of their second week in a tour to Franconia and the White Mountains — omitting Monadnoc till after years, when Henry several times camped there. In the volume describing that riparian romance, he introduced some notice of mountain-ascensions made later—to Wachusett, Greylock, and the Catskills, which he also mentions in "Walden." The walk to Wachusett he had described in the short-lived "Boston Miscellany" in 1842, for Mr. Hale, its editor. The Catskill Range, Greylock, and the Hoosac Mountain he climbed in 1844. Between the two he had made his first considerable sojourn away from Concord — six months in New York City and its vicinity, living as tutor in the family, at Staten Island, of Mr. William Emerson. It was noteworthy to Thoreau from his first acquaintance there with Horace Greeley, and the elder Henry

James, with whom afterwards he had much to do. His tours on Cape Cod and in Canada were after his residence by Walden — from 1849 onward, for the Cape, and in Canada in 1850. Many pages in the Journal, describing this Canadian tour, exist among the manuscripts owned by Mr. Bixby, but were omitted by Sophia and Channing in making up the printed record. Some omissions, but not so many, were made in editing the "Cape Cod"; but those were largely left out by Thoreau himself, in shortening his papers for "Putnam's Magazine." Channing had visited the Cape before Thoreau, but also went with him on two of Thoreau's visits there — in 1849 and 1855; in both 1850 and 1857, Thoreau went alone. Of Cape Cod he made a more extended study than of any of his mountains; though not more than of the Maine woods. His longest visit to Monadnoc was in the late summer of 1860, before the attack of bronchitis came on which never really left him until it occasioned his death. Between these dates (December 3, 1860, and May, 1862), he made the longest of his journeys, to Minnesota and return, in which he kept no regular journal, and had no time afterward to write out his notes in full. Of this experience, therefore, there is no complete rec-

ord, the only one accessible being the volume which I edited for the Bibliophile Society in 1905, from papers in Mr. Bixby's possession (by purchase from Mr. Russell, of Worcester) or in mine. The journey extended from May 11 to July 10, 1861, two months, and we find in the later Journal a few entries concerning it. For companion on this latest tour he was to have been accompanied, as on so many before, by Ellery Channing; whose courage, his spirits, or his money gave out at the last, and Channing failed to meet him at Niagara, as he had given Thoreau to understand he might do. His friend was much disappointed, and had to fall back on the companionship of young Horace Mann, a student of natural science, modest and good-natured, but not very conversible, and without the lively wit and Shakespearean versatility of Channing, in which Thoreau delighted and found refreshment.

The Maine woods were another serious proposition, like Cape Cod and Monadnoc, and involved more than one visit. His first one was in May, 1838, but did not include camping in the forest, as in later years. His aunt Mrs. Billings (Elizabeth Thoreau) had died years before, leaving in Bangor daughters who had married

into the families of Thatcher and Lowell; and these relatives frequently interchanged visits. I met some of each family in Concord, during the residence of the Thoreaus there, from 1855 to 1873, and one of the Thatchers was the executor of the wills of Sophia and of Maria Thoreau. I met him at the grave of Sophia in Concord in October, 1876. Of Henry's first visit in Bangor in 1838 some mention has been made. He had been there again before I made his acquaintance in 1855, and he printed accounts of two excursions, in 1846 to Ktaadn, and in 1853 to Chesuncook. The first was placed in Horace Greeley's hands for sale, and appeared in the "Union Magazine" of 1848—putting in Thoreau's pocket fifty dollars, and leaving to Greeley twenty-five dollars for his brokerage in selling it and getting paid; "the latter" Greeley wrote, "being by far the most difficult part of the business." He had sold other essays for Thoreau to Graham and to Sartain, magazine-publishers, and his twenty-five dollars covered the whole transaction. The Chesuncook paper began in the "Atlantic" in 1858; a third essay, "The Allegash and East Branch," described his last excursion, in which he was accompanied, in 1857, by Edward Hoar, brother of the Senator, who is said to have been

his comrade in the excursion of 1844 up the Musketaquid, which resulted so unluckily in the forest fire of Concord on Town-Meeting day, and sadly damaged Thoreau's reputation among the owners of Concord woodlots, of which he surveyed and mapped so many afterwards. He never published his account of this adventure, but carefully wrote it out, and it will be found in my next chapter, with explanations.

Thoreau's visit to Fire Island in 1850, to collect what could be found of the effects of Margaret Fuller (the Marchioness d'Ossoli) and her Italian husband, took him, among other odd places to Patchogue, where he found the drunken Dutchman so felicitously described by him in Channing's biography. He did not visit Cape Ann till September, 1858, spending three days in that region; earlier in the same year, while lecturing at Lynn, he heard the evidence in favor of the sea-serpent seen at Nahant in 1819–20. In 1857 he had heard from his friend Marston Watson at Plymouth the story of the sea-serpent seen by Daniel Webster in returning from Manomet to Marshfield, but which Webster would not allow to be related, lest he "should never hear the last of it."

Early readers of the "Atlantic Monthly" will recall that Thoreau was a contributor to its first

volume; but there, and in the second volume, completing the Chesuncook paper, he ceased, and did not reappear for years. In the ninth volume, a few weeks after his death in 1862, his pleasing essay on "Walking" came out, followed by other essays in the tenth, twelfth, and fourteenth volumes. Why this long silence at his most productive period? Because he refused to send his manuscripts to be docked and mutilated by J. R. Lowell, the first editor of the "Atlantic." In his "Chesuncook," eulogizing the pine tree of the Maine woods, he had written, "It is as immortal as I am, and perchance will go to as high a heaven, there to tower above me still." What he meant by this is hard to say; but Lowell struck it out, exercising a similar discretion to that which Emerson had used in omitting portions of Thoreau's "Winter Walk" in the "Dial." But the author objected to Lowell's excision, and would send nothing more to that editor, whom probably he had come to dislike for other sins of commission or omission — as in the admission to the "Atlantic" of Charles Norton's wholly inadequate notice of John Brown, in 1860. In 1862 Thoreau lay slowly dying in his mother's house at Concord, and the magazine had a new editor, J. T. Fields, the publisher, who saw the merits

of this scrupulous man of genius as an attraction for his magazine.

The same year that he visited Chesuncook (1853) he first visited the Wayside Inn (Howe Tavern), then still open as a tavern, as it was in 1851 when I was first there; and Haverhill, with its old "houses of refuge" from Indian attack. In 1856 he made two or three noteworthy journeys, between September 5 and 12 to Vermont (Brattleboro and Bellows Falls), and to Walpole, New Hampshire, where the Alcotts were then living for a year, and where he learned the story of Colonel Bellows, from whom, he says, most of the Walpole people are descended. This was chiefly a botanical excursion, and he enumerates some fifty plants of which he obtained fresh specimens, and fifteen pressed specimens, given him by the Misses Brown, of Brattleboro. He ascended the Fall Mountain at Bellows Falls, and examined the celebrated falls in the Connecticut, beneath it, quoting what the Tory historian of Connecticut says of the river there. This book of Peters, full of fables and prejudices, pleased him by its style, and he says of it: —

It did me good to read the wholesale, hearty statements of Peters — strong, living, human speech, so much better than the emasculated modern histories,

like Bancroft's and the rest, cursed with a style. I would rather read such histories, though every sentence were a falsehood, than our dull emasculated reports which bear the name of histories. The former, having a human breadth and interest behind them, are nearer to nature and to truth after all. The historian is required to feel a human interest in his subject, and to so express it.

After this excursion into literary criticism, Thoreau, as always, picks up pertinent facts which will sometime be of use to somebody, though perhaps never to himself. After reaching the temporary home of the Alcotts he sets down this piece of information: —

Rode the last mile into Walpole with a lumberer, who said that when he commenced operations at Bellows Falls he thought there was not more than 100,000 feet of lumber there, but they had already got out four millions. He also imported some of those masts from Canada West that I had seen go through Concord to Boston. They were rafted along Lake Erie (Mr. Dorr [1]

[1] This was Captain Dorr, of the steamboat service on Lake Erie, whose son was a pupil of mine, and who boarded at Mrs. Thoreau's, where his father visited him. In the late summer of 1856, on my excursion to Niagara, Chicago, Iowa, and Nebraska City, on the business of Kansas freedom, Captain Dorr politely escorted me from Buffalo to Niagara, sitting beside me in the train, at my left, and emphasizing his remarks by jogging my ribs with his right elbow. Years after, at the funeral of Garrison in Roxbury, the poet Whittier, in the pew at my left, repeated this gesture — an old-fashioned Yankee trait.

of Buffalo afterward told me that he did this part on the lake with steamers, — merely running an inch chain through the butt of each log, and fastening the ends to a boom, which surrounded the whole, leaving the small ends to play in the lake), and in small rafts by canal to Albany, and thence by railroad *via* Rutland to Portland or Boston, for the navy; it cost only one third more to get them to the seacoast from Canada than from Bellows Falls. Remembering the difficulty in old times of loading one of these masts in New Hampshire for the King's Navy, this seemed to me the greatest triumph of the railroad.

Thus did our botanist pass, in a few pages of his Journal, from Linnæus and Gerard and the writers of modern history to the practical achievements of lumberers, timber-raftsmen, and railroad hands, — men with whom he loved to talk better than with the men pragmatically learned, which Lowell was, for all his wit and poesy.

The Vermont Botanical Excursion

This visit to Brattleboro in September, 1856, is one of the few distinctly botanical trips away from Concord, of which I find a definite record and result; but it was combined with a visit to friends who were also botanists. Mr. and Mrs. Addison Brown, of Brattleboro, were of the liberal reforming element in New England; their daugh-

ter, Miss Frances Brown, I had met at the house of friends in Boston; she was, I think, one of the pupils of George B. Emerson, a cousin of the Concord Emersons, and a good naturalist, as well as a good teacher, in Pemberton Square, Boston. Rev. John W. Brown, one of the pioneers in Kansas, and the first Unitarian minister in Lawrence, Kansas, was a kinsman of the Brattleboro family. The younger Miss Brown, now Mrs. Dunton, of Sheboygan, Wisconsin, in a letter of 1908, said: —

Henry Thoreau was the guest of Rev. Addison Brown's family in their house on Chase Street. At that time none of the family had met him, but my father had corresponded with him, and had invited him to our home, if he should come to Brattleboro. When he did (September 5, 1856) it was to look up an Aster which did not grow in Concord. He struck me as being very odd, very wise, and exceedingly observing. He roamed about the country at will, and I was fortunate enough to be his companion on a walk to our mountain. I was well acquainted with the flora, and could meet him understandingly thereupon; but was abashed at the numerous questions he asked, about all sorts of things, to which I could only reply, "I do not know." It appealed to my sense of humor that a person with such a fund of knowledge should seek information from a young girl like myself; but I could not see that he had any fun in him. The only question I now recall is this: as we stood

on the summit of Mount Wantastiquet, he fixed his earnest gaze on a distant point in the landscape [perhaps Mount Ascutney], asking, "How far is it in a bee-line to that spot?"

Thoreau's own comment was more specific:—

This mountain is the most remarkable feature here. The village is peculiar from the nearness of the primitive wood and this mountain. Within three rods of Brown's house was excellent botanical ground on the side of a primitive wooded hillside. Above all is this everlasting mountain, forever lowering over the village, shortening the day and wearing a misty cap each morning. Its top is covered with wood. We saw Ascutney, between forty and fifty miles up the Connecticut River; but not Monadnoc, on account of woods.

Mrs. Dunton adds:—

Among my cherished possessions are three letters from him. The first (March, 1857), on sending me the Climbing Fern, gave directions for opening and mounting it, and added, "Climbing Fern would have been a pretty name for some delicate Indian maiden." The second was to thank me for a box of Mayflowers (*Epigæa repens*). "I think they amount to more than those that grow in Concord. Your Bloodroot, too (which we have not at all), had not suffered in the least; part of it is transferred to my sister's garden. Preserving one splendid vase-full, I distributed the rest of the Mayflowers among my neighbors, Mrs. R. W. Emerson,

Mrs. Ripley, Mr. Edward Hoar, and others. They have sweetened a good part of the town ere this."

Having reached home, September 11, Thoreau says: —

No view I have had of the Connecticut Valley, at Brattleboro or Walpole, is equal to that of the Concord from Nawshawtuct. Here is a more interesting horizon, more variety and richness. Up there it is nothing but river-valley and hills. Here there is so much more, that we have forgotten we live in a valley.

He then in his Journal copies the names of forty-seven plants collected by him on this excursion, besides fifteen pressed specimens given him by the Brown family. In May, 1859, thanking Mrs. Dunton for another box of Mayflowers, Thoreau said: —

It chanced that on the very day they arrived, while surveying in the next town [Acton], I found more of this flower than I had ever seen hereabouts, and I have therefore named a certain path "Mayflower Path" on my plan. But a botanist's experience is full of coincidences. If you think much about some flower which you never saw, you are pretty sure to find it some day, actually growing near by you. In the long run we find what we expect. We shall be fortunate, then, if we expect great things.[1]

[1] Copied from the yearly Bulletin of the Vermont Botanical Club for 1908.

I was dining every day with the Thoreau family in this September, and heard Thoreau's account of his Vermont visit when he returned just before the middle of September; and far more about the Eagleswood and New York visits soon after, which are described in the "Familiar Letters." At this period Thoreau seemed to be in the best health in which I had ever seen him, and was very active, as he was in both these considerable journeys.

The last excursion or journey in 1856 was far more important, and kept Thoreau away from his beloved Concord a month, from October 24, when he started for Worcester, to November 25, when he got home from Eagleswood and Perth Amboy, New York, Brooklyn, and Greeley's country residence at Chappaqua. In this month he had surveyed and mapped Marcus Spring's large estate at Eagleswood; had lectured to the guests and tenants there; had renewed his old acquaintance with Greeley, become intimate with Walt Whitman, seen Barnum's Museum, and heard an opera in company with Greeley. Little mention of this adventure appears in the Journals, but the story was told (to me) on his return, and in his "Letters."

These excursions, though full of interest to

Thoreau, and adding in many ways to his vast stock of knowledge and to the growing circle of his friends, were begrudged by him, unless they were accompanied by invitations to lecture or to follow up his later pursuit of land-surveying. In visiting Plymouth in October, 1854, he both lectured for his friend Watson and surveyed his park and garden. He had visited Marcus Spring in 1850, as one of the most intimate friends of Margaret Fuller, — as also was Horace Greeley. In November, 1856, Mr. Alcott was with the Springs at Eagleswood, and holding conversations there, at a school in which the Springs were interested, and which was taught by an acquaintance of mine in college, who was the class poet of his class at Harvard, that of 1853, of which Dr. C. W. Eliot was a member. Mr. Spring, in October, wrote to Concord, inviting Thoreau to be his guest at Eagleswood to give lectures and survey and map the two hundred acres of land in which he was an owner, and which had been the seat of a Community, in the years when Brook Farm flourished and faded and Fruitlands failed. Reaching New York, by way of Worcester and Norwich, too late for the steamer running to Perth Amboy, thirty miles from New York, in the morning, he spent

that part of the day calling at the "Tribune" office, the Astor Library and the studio of an English artist, Bellew, who had visited him in Concord. He reached the landing at Perth Amboy at 5 P.M. on a Saturday, and rode to Eagleswood along with Miss Elizabeth Peabody, who had been visiting there. He said in a letter of November 1, to his sister: —

> Perth Amboy is a city, about as big as Concord; and Eagleswood is a village a mile and a quarter southwest of it, on the Raritan Bay side. It is a queer place. There is one large, long, stone building, which cost some $40,000, a few shops and offices, an old farmhouse, and Mr. Spring's perfectly private residence, within twenty rods of the main building. Its central fact is Mr. Theodore Weld's school, recently established, around which various other things revolve.

Mr. Weld was the well-known anti-slavery orator, who had married one of the Grimke sisters from South Carolina, and was intimate with J. G. Birney, a Kentucky planter who had freed his slaves at Huntsville, in Alabama, and was the anti-slavery candidate for President in 1844, — thereby preventing New York from voting for Henry Clay, and giving the election to Polk, the pro-slavery candidate, who brought on the Mexican War. Mr. Birney lived at Eagleswood;

so did Mrs. Spring's father, Arnold Buffum, an uncle of my friend Dr. Pliny Earle, Rhode Island and Massachusetts Quakers. Mrs. Caroline Kirkland, an author of some distinction then, had just come to live at Eagleswood, and Gerrit Smith and his family visited there; while the Greeleys were friendly, though then living at Chappaqua, instead of at their comfortable old home in a suburb of New York, where MargaretFuller had lived with them.

It was a convenient station between New York and Philadelphia, to which latter city, then Quakerish, Thoreau went to lecture, with no marked success, while visiting Mr. Spring. He also made several visits to New York and Brooklyn, in one of which he called on Whitman, in company with Mr. Alcott. On Saturday, November 8, they had visited Greeley at his farm, thirty-six miles north of New York; on the 9th, Sunday, they heard Henry Ward Beecher in his Brooklyn church; and on the 10th they found Whitman at his mother's in Brooklyn.[1] Mr. Alcott had seen him before; and both of them

[1] From Mr. Alcott's diary I have taken a more detailed sketch of these hours with Thoreau and Greeley and Whitman in the early days of that busy November; five months after which they were again together at Brooklawn, Daniel Ricketson's country house in New Bedford.

spoke of him to me, on their return to Concord, with some enthusiasm, as Emerson had done the year before, when he gave me my copy of the first edition of "Leaves of Grass." Years after, Emerson said in his funeral eulogy on Thoreau (which I heard), "Three men have of late years strongly impressed Mr. Thoreau, — John Brown (in 1857 and 1859), his Indian guide in Maine, Joe Polis (1857), and a third person, not known to this audience." He meant Whitman, whom Thoreau only met, I think, on this Brooklyn occasion; though they may also have met at Boston when Whitman was there in the spring of 1860. Thoreau thus described him, a week after, to Harrison Blake: —

He is apparently the greatest democrat the world has seen. Kings and aristocracy go by the board at once, as they have long deserved to. A remarkably strong though coarse nature, of a sweet disposition, and much prized by his friends. Though peculiar and rough in his exterior, he is essentially a gentleman. I am still somewhat in a quandary about him. I feel that he is essentially strange to me, at any rate; but I am surprised by the sight of him. He is very broad, but, as I have said, not fine.

He said that I misapprehended him. I am not quite sure that I do. He told us that he loved to ride up and down Broadway all day on an omnibus, sitting beside

the driver, listening to the roar of the carts, and sometimes gesticulating and declaiming Homer at the top of his voice. He has long been an editor and writer for the newspapers — was editor of the "New Orleans Crescent" once; but now has no employment but to read and write in the forenoon and walk in the afternoon, like all the rest of the scribbling gentry.

November 7, Thoreau came in from Eagleswood to Mr. Alcott's room at 15 Laight Street in New York, and there met one of Whitman's friends, John Swinton, of whom he learned something about Whitman. Mrs. Botta, who then held receptions in New York, which Emerson attended with pleasure, had invited Thoreau with Alcott for that day, but Henry declined. He slept there that Friday night as Alcott's guest, and the next day, Saturday, the two met Greeley at the Harlem station, and went by train with him to his farm, where they spent the day; but came back to New York at evening, accompanied by Greeley and Miss Alice Cary, the poet, with whom, no doubt, Thoreau went to the opera. Sunday morning they crossed the ferry to hear Beecher at his Plymouth Church. As usual, they found it crowded. Alcott says: —

It was a spectacle; so was himself, the Preacher, — if preacher there be anywhere now in pulpits. His

hearers had to weep, had to laugh, under his potent magnetism; but his doctrine of justice to all men, bond and free, was grand. Thoreau called it pagan, but I pronounced it good, — very good, — the best sight I had witnessed for many a day, and hopeful for the coming time.

They dined at Mrs. Manning's, where was a young lady curious to see Thoreau. Sunday afternoon they called on Whitman, but, finding him out, they "got all they could from his mother, a stately, sensible matron, believing absolutely in her Walter, and telling us how good he was, and how wise as a boy; how his two sisters and four brothers loved him, and still take counsel of him." She said Walt would be glad to see them Monday forenoon; when, accompanied by Mrs. Tyndale, of Philadelphia, they sat with him for two hours. Thoreau said afterward: —

I did not get far with him in conversation, for two others were present. His book is wonderfully like the Orientals; though when I inquired if he had read them, he said, "No; tell me about them." Answering some remark of his aboutAmerican politics, I chanced to say that I did not think much of the present America, nor of politics,—which may have been a damper to him. Since seeing him I am not disturbed by any brag or egotism in "Leaves of Grass." He may turn out the least of a braggart of any of us, with a better right to be confident.

Thoreau seems, too, to have thought that Emerson made rather too much of Whitman's printing the Concord letter in his second edition, a copy of which he gave to his visitors. Thoreau disliked two or three pieces in it which he found disagreeable, but on the whole found it "very brave and American, after whatever deductions."

That seems to have been the verdict of the past sixty years.

Thoreau's next considerable journeying was around New Bedford, where he met his Concord friends Alcott and Channing, April 2, 1857, and remained in that region until April 15, the guest of Daniel Ricketson, at Brooklawn, where he sang "Tom Bowline" and danced to the music of Mrs. Ricketson's piano.

In the summer of 1857 he went on what he regarded as his most valuable journey to and through the Maine woods, because in it he had the company of Edward Hoar, an elder brother of the Senator, and a former resident in California, and he made the acquaintance of his most accomplished Indian, Joe Polis, of whom he has much to say in his published account, and some few things also in those parts of the Journal which did not get into the magazine or the volume. I

DANIEL RICKETSON

In 1862

was dining daily at the table of Mrs. Thoreau when this excursion was planned, and heard it much discussed. The summer visit to Cape Cod had been for Henry's health, more than for sight-seeing. He had visited Plymouth and Clark's Island on his way to Sandwich and the Cape, and was improved by his journey. He therefore sent the following letter to a cousin at Bangor: —

Concord, *July* 11, 1857.

Dear Cousin, —

Finding myself somewhat stronger than for two or three years past, I am bent on making a leisurely and economical excursion into your woods; say in a canoe, with two companions, through the Moosehead to the Allegash Lakes; and possibly down the river to the French settlement, and so homeward by whatever course we may prefer.

I wish to go at an earlier season than formerly, or within ten days, notwithstanding the flies, etc. and we should want a month at our disposal.

I have just written to Mr. Loomis (one of the Cambridgeport men who went through Bangor last year and called on you), inviting him to be one of the party; and for a third have thought of your son Charles, who has had some fresh as well as salt water experience.

The object of this note is to ask if he would like to go, and you would like to have him go, on such an excursion. If so, I will come to Bangor, spend a day or two with you, on my way, buy a canoe &c., and be ready by the time my other man comes along.

If Charles cannot go, we may find another man here, or possibly take an Indian. A friend of mine would like to accompany me, but I think he has neither woodcraft nor strength enough.

Please let me hear from you as soon as possible.

Father has arrived safe and sound, and he says the better for his journey; though he no longer has his Bangor appetite. He intends writing to you.

Yours truly,

HENRY D. THOREAU.

I had met the Lowells and Mr. Loomis at Concord, and Henry's father, as appears from this letter, had lately returned from his last visit to his Bangor nephews and nieces, Thatchers and Lowells and their children, descendants of his elder sister Elizabeth, who had long been dead.[1] At this time only his sisters Jane and Maria were living; and they spent much time in Concord, though their home was in Cambridgeport, where

[1] Her daughters were living. One of them had married a Thatcher, of the Admiral's family, and her sons were intimate with the Concord family. Mr. Loomis was a mathematician, astronomer, and poet, who had married Miss Wilder, of Cambridgeport, and she was the mother of a daughter Mabel, now the wife of Professor Todd, of Amherst College, and herself an artist, author, and astronomer. I had met him and her at the Thoreau house, and Mr. and Mrs. Loomis took tea there, with Ellery Channing, the evening after Henry's funeral at the Concord Church. Mr. Loomis also arrived in Concord accidentally the day of Sophia's funeral in October, 1876. Her letters show her beautiful spirit, and that of her aunt Maria.

the family of Rev. John Wilder resided. Mr. Loomis soon after married a daughter of Mr. Wilder, and their daughter is the accomplished Mrs. Mabel Loomis Todd, of Amherst, who as a child was a favorite of Sophia Thoreau, and of her aunt Maria, as their letters show. The person whom Thoreau thought not strong enough for the excursion I take to have been Harrison Blake, who in this same year did join Thoreau and Edward Hoar in a sojourn at Mount Washington, of which much is said in the "Familiar Letters." There were also one or two trips to Monadnoc with Blake and with Channing, of which the poet had much to say in his volume "The Wanderer," and which Thoreau describes in the later Journals.

The Mississippi River and Minnesota Journey

This was the last and longest journey of Thoreau's ever-journeying life. It took him away farther from his dear Concord hills, Nashawtuct, Anursnac, and Ponkawtassett, than he had ever been before, — nearly two thousand miles, — and occupied his time for two months of the year 1861. It had been planned and debated long in advance, for the benefit of his failing health; and was particularly urged by Channing, who, more

than twenty years earlier, had lived on an Illinois prairie not far from the southern border of Wisconsin, and had visited those regions once or twice since. It had been as good as settled that Channing should accompany him. This would have had the great advantage for the invalid, that he would have been with his best and most familiar friend, outside of his own household, and a companion acquainted with the country and the modes of travel and of living. But everything was uncertain which depended on Channing's variable mood, and in this case, possibly, on the state of his purse, for his income was then small. Consequently Thoreau wrote on May 3, 1861, to another intimate comrade, Harrison Blake, of Worcester, with whom he had been corresponding and rambling for a dozen years, intimating a wish that Blake should go. This was his plan, as explained to Blake: —

I have concluded it will be most expedient for me to try the air of Minnesota, say somewhere about St. Paul. I am only waiting to be well enough to start. I hope to get off within a week or ten days. I shall have to study my comfort in travelling to a remarkable degree, — stopping to rest, etc., if need be. I think to get a through ticket to Chicago, with liberty to stop frequently on the way: at Niagara Falls several days or a week, at a private boarding-house; then a night or

day at Detroit; and as much at Chicago as my health may require. At Chicago I can decide at what point — Fulton, Dunleith,[1] or another — to strike the Mississippi, and take a boat to St. Paul. I expect to be gone three months, and would like to return by a different route, perhaps Mackinaw and Montreal.

I have thought, of course, of finding a companion; yet not seriously, because I had no right to offer myself as a companion to anybody; having such a peculiarly private and all-absorbing but miserable business as *my* health, and not altogether *his* to attend to. Nevertheless I have just now decided to let you know of my intention, thinking it barely possible that you might like to make a part or the whole of the journey at the same time; and perhaps that your own health may be such as to be benefited by it.

Mr. Blake could not then go, but asked Thoreau to spend a day at Worcester with him on his way, which was done on Sunday, May 11–12, 1861. It was finally arranged, as he thought, that Channing should meet him at Niagara, where he would make his first long halt; he then had his list of clothes made out by his mother and sister; it was this:[2]

A half-thick coat, a thin coat, "best pants," three shirts, a flannel shirt, three pairs of socks, slippers,

[1] Now East Dubuque, in Illinois.

[2] Pencilled on a scrap of a letter from Chauncey Smith, a Boston patent lawyer, enclosing an endorsed note of hand, for $100, payable April 23, 1860.

underclothing, five handkerchiefs, a waistcoat, towels and soap.

With such little articles as he might need, including medicines. Then his compass and microscope, a plant-book, for specimens, a botany-book (no doubt, Gray), insect boxes, twine and cards, writing and blotting paper, tape; and a dipper and bottle for foot-journeys.

On another scrap of paper are a few figures, giving the different pockets in each of which he has a sum of money; the total of the sums being one hundred and eighty dollars. The details of his expenses, to be given hereafter, amount to less than this, — about one hundred and fifty dollars. We may assume the total cost for two months as between one hundred and fifty and one hundred and eighty dollars.

From Worcester to Suspension Bridge, on the Boston and Albany and New York Central Railroads, Thoreau made these notes: —

May 13. Hills near the railroad between Westfield and Chester Village, and thereafter in Massachusetts, may be as high or higher but more sincere, or less modish. Leafing in Western Massachusetts more advanced; apple-trees greenish, red elderberry just beginning. (*May* 14.) From Albany to Schenectady, Level, in pine plains; white pine and white birch;

shadbush in bloom; with hills at last. No houses, only two or three huts in edge of woods on our road. . . . The Mohawk at Schenectady; stream yellow or clay-colored, bordered with willows and maples. Above Schenectady the Mohawk valley is more than half a mile wide; low bank, with interval on each side, bounded by hills 200 and 300 feet high. On north side they begin to flat off at Palatine Bridge. Most striking rough scenery at Little Falls. Pine uplands; country spreads out wide this side of Utica. Yet more high flats beyond Rome, and very wet. Syracuse with lakes and salt-works. Considerable cedar swamps thus far, and farther. In Syracuse, large, city-like streets. Country between Syracuse and Rochester more diversified, or hill and plain. Afterwards flat again, and probably at last descending. Rochester, with interesting river and Falls dividing it. Arrived at the Suspension Bridge for the night.

On the 15th he had his first view of the Falls, and, like everybody, was much impressed by it. In the afternoon he was at Goat Island. He wrote: —

The most imposing sight as yet was the sight of the Rapids from the upper bridge, like the sea off Cape Cod. The great apparent height of the waves tumbling over the immense ledges at a distance, while the water view is broad and boundless in that direction, as if you were looking out to sea. Yet the distances are very deceptive; the most distant billow was scarcely more than a quarter of a mile off, though it appeared two

miles or more. Many ducks were constantly floating a little way down from the Rapids, — then flying back and alighting again. The water farther up was broken into lengths of four to six rods, more, probably. There were masses of ice under the edge of the cliff.

Horace Mann asked me if I had not heard the sound of the Falls, as we went last night from the Suspension Bridge depot to the New York Central hotel; but I had not, though it was certainly loud enough. I had probably mistaken it for the sound of a train coming in, or a locomotive letting off steam, — of which we have so much in Concord. It sounds hardly so loud this morning, though now, at Niagara town, we are only a third of a mile off; the impression is as if I were surrounded by factories.[1]

The days spent at Niagara were well employed, gathering and noting down plants, observing birds, measuring the girth of trees, etc. May 17, he made this entry: —

Go to Suspension Bridge and walk up on the Canadian side. Pestered by coachmen, etc. The completest view of the Falls is from that side. The "Clifton House" commands the best view of any public house. Afternoon to the river above the Falls. I find Indian pottery. A man says he calls the ducks in the river "coween," and that they and other ducks, both wild

[1] There were none in Niagara then, but now a great many, besides the use made of this immense water-power to turn mill-wheels at a distance. These first observations, written out at his hotel, show how original and close were his observations.

and tame, alight in the mist, and are often carried over the Falls. Says that here they catch with a seine black and white bass, pickerel, muskellonge, etc., and below the Falls eels, catfish, etc. In the woods east of Niagara Town is the red-headed woodpecker. The ducks in the Rapids are apparently the long-tailed duck or "old squaw."

May 18. Measure the trees on Goat Island. The bass (two of them), 14 feet 4 inches, and 13 ft. 5 in.; two beeches, 8 ft. 6, and 7 ft. 7. This was the circumference. (Measuring the girth with a string is the common method.)

Sunday, May 19, there is no entry in the Notes.

May 20. Niagara to Detroit. Canada agreeably diversified, i.e., more, as compared with New York; with a view of Lake Ontario, quite sea-like. Decidedly more level west of London, and wet, — but probably rich. Great fern with bulrush; wild fowl east of Lake St. Clair, of which a long and fine view on each side of the Thames. The one-dollar houses in Detroit are "The Garrison" and "The Franklin."

May 21. Detroit to Chicago. Very hilly to Ypsilanti, then hilly to Ann Arbor, then less hilly to Lake Michigan. All hard wood, or no evergreen except some white pine when we struck Lake Michigan (on the sands from the Lake), and some larch before. Phlox, varying from white to bluish, and painted cup, deep scarlet, and also yellow (?), or was this wallflower (?) — all very common through Michigan, and the former, at least, earlier than with us. The prevailing shade tree in Chicago is

the cottonwood. Chicago is about 14 feet above the Lake, — sewers and main drains fall but two feet in a mile.

May 22. Saw last evening high dune hills along the Lake, and much open oak wood, low, but old (?) with black trunks but light foliage. Rode down Michigan Avenue. Men sometimes see the land loom across the Lake 60 miles. The city is built chiefly of limestone from 40 miles southwest. Lake Street is the chief business one. The water is milky.

May 23. From Chicago to Dunleith [East Dubuque]. Very level the first 20 miles; then considerably more undulating; the greatest rolling prairie without trees is just beyond Winnebago. The last 40 miles in the northwest of Illinois quite hilly. The Mississippi causes backwater in the Galena River for 8 miles back from its mouth on the east bank of the Mississippi. The water is high now; the thin woods flooded, with open water behind.

Here was Thoreau's first view of the great river, on which he embarked, May 24, for a two days' voyage to St. Paul in Minnesota. His notes are full of interest; everything was novel.

There is only one boat up daily by this line,—in no case allowed to stop on the way. Small houses, without barns, surrounded and overshadowed by great stacks of wheat-straw. It is being thrashed on the ground. The distances on the prairie are deceptive: a stack looks like a hill in the horizon, a quarter or half mile

off, — it stands out so bold and high. The inhabitants remind me of mice nesting in a wheat-stack, which is their wealth.

I see the marsh pink, and apples on a flowered, apple-like tree (thorn-like) through Illinois, which may be the *Pyrus coronaria*. Women are working in the fields quite commonly. Some wood is *always* visible, but generally not large. The fences are of narrow boards; the towns are, as it were, stations on a railroad.

Sights along the Mississippi (*May 24–26, 1861*)

Steaming up the River, here sixty rods wide, but three quarters of a mile between the bluffs. The bluffs are (say) 150 to 200 feet high. Rarely is there room for a village at the foot of the cliffs. The broad, flooded low intervale is covered with the willow in bloom (20 feet high), rather slender, and probably other kinds, — elm and white maple and cottonwood. Now boatable between the trees; and probably many ducks are there. There are oaks on the top of the bluffs, ash, elm, aspen; bass on the slopes and by the shore. The birds are kingfishers, small ducks, jays, etc. The river banks are in their primitive condition between the towns, which is almost everywhere. Occasionally a little lonely house stands on a flat or slope, often deserted. We see holes in the sides of hills at Cassville, where lead has been dug out. Occasionally there are low islands. There are great rafts of boards and shingles, four or five rods wide and fifteen or twenty rods long; but very few small boats.

Passengers land on the shore, oftentimes with a

plank. Twenty men in ten minutes load us with some 80 or 90 cords of wood at one landing, — disturbing a bat, which flies aboard of us. A willow-tree is shown floating horizontally across the river.

We got to Prairie du Chien the evening of May 24, and to Brownsville about six the next morning. Macgregor is a new town in Iowa, opposite Prairie du Chien. The latter is "the smartest town on the river"; it exports the most wheat of any town between St. Paul and St. Louis. There is wheat in sacks, great heaps of them at Prairie du Chien, covered at night, and all on the ground. We reached Fountain City about noon on the 25th. White pines began a half dozen miles above La Crosse, a few birches common. The cliffs here are high, and interrupted, or in promontories. The bluffs grow farther apart, and the rain channels more numerous than yesterday; sometimes there are two or three miles from bluff to bluff. We take a wood-boat along with us. Oaks, commonly open, — on both sides of the river. We see Indians encamped below Wabasha, with Dakota-shaped wigwams; also a loon on a lake, and fish leaping.

Every town has a wharf, with one storage building (or several) on it, and as many hotels; this is everything except commission merchants. "Storage," "Forwarding," or "Commission," — one or all these words are on the most prominent new buildings, close to the waterside. Perhaps there will be a heap of sacks filled with wheat on the natural jetty or levee close by; or, above Dubuque and Dunleith, a blue stack of pig lead, which is in no danger of being washed away. We

see where they have dug for lead in the sides of the bluffs for many miles above Galena.

The steamer approaching whistles, then strikes a bell about six times funereally, with a pause after the third bell; and then you see the whole village making haste to the Landing, — commonly the raw, stony or sandy shore; the postmaster with his mailbag, the passenger, and almost every dog and pig in town. That is commonly one narrow street with backyards, at an angle of about 45 degrees with the horizon. If there is more flat space between the water and the bluff, it is almost sure to be occupied by a flourishing and larger town. We deserted the outside of the steamboat at a few miles above Red Wing, where there was a remarkable bluff, standing apart *before* the town, as we approached it. We reached St. Paul at two or three o'clock in the morning of May 26. The bluffs are here very much lower; and even below Red Wing they had been far more interrupted by hollows. We wooded up again before reaching Lake Pepin, taking the woodboat along with us, now on this side, now on that.

May 26. Sunday. Breakfast at the American House in St. Paul, and come on by stage in the rain to St. Anthony, nine miles over the prairie in the rain, — the road muddy and sandy. At St. Paul they dig their building stone out of the cellar; but it is apparently poor stuff. We had towed a flatboat-load of stone pots from Dubuque to Winona, — the latter a pretty place.

Remaining at St. Anthony and Minneapolis a week or more, Thoreau noted all things note-

worthy there — among others, the welcome presence of a naturalist, Dr. Charles L. Anderson, who gave him companionship and information. He reminds himself: —

St. Anthony was settled about 1847, Minneapolis in 1851. Its main streets are the unaltered prairie, with bur and other oaks left standing. The roads on the prairie are a mere trail, more or less broad and distinct. Fort Snelling is thirty years old, and there was an account of it in the old "New England Magazine." It retains but three or four acres of the great unbroken prairie that formerly belonged to the Fort; near which is a red oak, the largest oak I have seen here. The Mississippi is at its highest stage, but is running off. I notice how the ferry across the Mississippi is worked by the stream itself.

A slight pencil sketch, such as often appears in his Journal, here illustrates this device. He witnessed a regimental drill at this fort, where volunteers for the Union army in the Civil War were received daily and sent forward to serve under Grant and other generals who had served in the Mexican War. He notes, "Some 600 volunteers are there; about 300 had left that morning."

Writing to me some weeks later, from Red Wing, he said: —

The people of Minnesota have *seemed* to me more cold — to feel less implicated in the war — than the

people of Massachusetts. However, I have dealt partly with those of Southern birth, and have seen but little way beneath the surface. I was glad to be told yesterday that there was a good deal of weeping here at Red Wing when the volunteers at Fort Snelling followed the regulars to the seat of war. They do not weep when their children go *up* the river to occupy the deserted forts, though they *may* have to fight the Indians there. It has chanced that about half the men I have spoken with in Minnesota, whether travellers or settlers, were from Massachusetts. It is apparent that Massachusetts, for one State at least, is doing much more than her share in carrying the war on.

This activity was wholly approved by Thoreau, who believed from the beginning that it would prove a war for emancipation, which he foresaw and predicted.

Fort Snelling is built of limestone (tawny or butterish) ten feet high, at an angle of the two rivers, St. Peter's and the Mississippi. I overlook the broad valley of the St. Peter's River, bounded on the south, as I look, by a long range of low hills. The government buildings are handsome; there was a mill here before the settlement. Steamers go up to the Sauk Rapids, above the Falls of St. Anthony, near a hundred miles farther, and then you are fairly in the pine woods and the lumbering country. The St. Paul Mission to the Indians was not far south of the Fort.

On May 28 he went botanizing with Dr. Anderson to Lake Calhoun, and found many plants new to him. While gathering them he notes, "The rose-breasted grosbeak very abundant in the woods of the Minnehaha, singing robin-like all the while"; and that "acorns are full as scarce as with us in Concord, picked up by the *Spermophili*, and no doubt planted by them." He continues: "A man sustained himself one winter on the spermophiles which he shot with a pistol, —a little flavored with slippery-elm bark." This tree, which is rare in Concord, he found common in Minnesota. His "spermophile" was a prairie squirrel, of whom he noted the habits, in these days of rambling round St. Anthony and its vicinity. He is the *Spermophilus tridecemlineatus*, "erect, making a space look like a glove over his hole, with the nest of the gopher *bursarius* or pouched," says Anderson. A distinction is here properly drawn between the Missouri "gopher" (*Geomys bursarius*) and the Wisconsin prairie squirrel. The name "gopher" describes the burrowing of the creature, and signifies a gray squirrel in Canada, a striped squirrel in Minnesota, and a pouched rat in Missouri; also a snake in Georgia, and a turtle in Florida. Thoreau described his find thus: —

Dirty grayish-white beneath, — above, dirty brown, with six dirty, tawny or clay-colored, very light-brown lines, alternating with broad, dark-brown lines or stripes (three times as broad), — the last having an interrupted line or square spot of the same color with the first-mentioned, running down their middle; reminding me of the rude pattern of some Indian work, — porcupine quills, "gopher-work" in baskets and pottery.

The other, apparently the Missouri gopher, is thus described: —

Larger, — and indistinctly or finely barred or spotted with dark and light brown, — the hairs being barred so, — dark — light — dark. Both have feet like a marmot, and large pouches, and sit up by their holes like a woodchuck; the first is not shy.

At St. Paul he early called on one of the Thatchers, of Bangor, where he received letters from home; and he remained in that vicinity for three weeks, and then joined in an expedition up St. Peter's River to the Lower Sioux Agency, to see the Sioux receive their annual payment from the United States. He started on the 17th of June, and on the 23d was at Red Wing below St. Paul, on his return homeward. But before going up the Minnesota River, he had various adventures and discoveries. In his notes I find these facts: —

General Pike's Journal for 1805 tells in a few words the story of the Lover's Leap, and says that his was the first white man's canoe that crossed the portage at St. Anthony's Falls. Catlin, a later writer, disappoints; it is only with his pencil that he is good. In 1823 the first steamer came up as far as Fort Snelling. I find that Frank Steele, for whom our steamer to Redwood is named, was in 1837 the first white man who "fleshed his axe in the unbroken wilderness," and commenced improvements in Minnesota; then he built a house in St. Anthony. Carver was on the Minnesota River in 1775, General Cass in 1820, and Schoolcraft in 1832. But La Hontan in the end of the seventeenth century described that river, without visiting it, — for it seems to be his *Rivière longue*. He related things so improbable that his letter has been regarded as pure fiction. But after sailing on it I am now inclined to reconsider the matter.

La Hontan's book was written between 1684 and 1695, though not published in Holland and England till 1703 and later. He was certainly at Mackinaw; and, having an idle winter there, he may have journeyed through Green Bay and the Wisconsin River, and made up, from his Indian guides and others, his fables about the Long River. He was an observer as exact as Thoreau, or as Hector St. John, when he chose to be veracious. By his full name he was Louis de L'Arce, a Gascon baron, lord of Hontan and Erleich,

and his account of Thoreau's puzzle, the ground squirrel, which he terms "the Swiss squirrel," is worth quoting: —

They are little animals resembling rats. The epithet of "Swiss" is bestowed upon 'em in regard that the hair which covers their body is streaked with black and white, and resembles a Switzer's doublet; while the streaks make a ring on each thigh which bears a deal of resemblance to a Swiss cap.

Thoreau says on another subject: —

On June 5 I went to Mrs. Hamilton's near Lake Harriet; the house (in Richfield) built seven years ago, in 1854. Around it was abundance of wild artichoke. She says the wild apple grew then about her premises; her husband first saw it on a ridge by the shore of Lake Harriet. They had dug up several trees and set them out, but all died. The settlers also set out the wild plum, thimbleberry, etc. So I went and searched in that very unlikely place, but could find nothing like it; though Hamilton said there was one there three feet higher than the lake. I brought home a thorn in bloom, and asked if that was it? Mrs. H. then gave me more particular directions, and I searched again faithfully; and this time I brought home an *amelanchier* as the nearest of kin, — doubting if the apple had ever been seen there; but she knew both those plants. Her husband had first discovered it by the fruit; she had not seen it in bloom.

We then called in Fitch and talked about it; he said

it *was* found, and the same they had in Vermont (?) and directed me to a Mr. Grimes as one who had found it. He was gone to catch the horses, to send his boy six miles for a doctor on account of a sick child. The boy showed me some of the trees he had set out this spring; but they had all died, having a long tap-root, and being taken up too late. Then I was convinced, by the sight of the just expanding though withered leaf; and I plucked a solitary withered flower, the better to analyze it. Finally I stayed, and went in search of the tree with the father, in his pasture, — where I found it first myself,[1] quite a cluster of them.

This is a good instance of the persistence of a botanist in finding what he is searching for. Before leaving Mrs. Hamilton's, June 14, he investigated the prairie squirrel more closely, along with Dr. Anderson; and noted another minute discovery: —

I saw a scum on the smooth surface of Lake Harriet, three or four feet from the shore, of the color of the shore-sand, like pollen and lint, which I took it to be. Taking it up in my hand, I was surprised to find it *was* shore-sand; sometimes pretty large grains, a tenth of an inch in diameter, but mostly a twentieth or less. Some were dark-brown, some white or yellowish, — some minute but perfectly regular pebbles of white quartz. I suppose the water, rising gently, lifts up a layer of sand, slightly cemented by some glutinous

[1] See footnote to p. 427.

matter; for I felt a slight stickiness in my hand after the gravel or sand was shaken off. It was in irregular oblong patches of scum, three or four inches long.

June 6, he was bird's-nesting, — a favorite occupation: —

I find a wild pigeon's nest in a young bass tree, ten feet from the ground, four or five rods south of Lake Calhoun. It was built over a broad fork of the tree, where a third slender twig divided it, and a fourth forked on it.

To make this clearer he drew on the page a slight sketch of the branching basswood, and then went on: —

Built of slender hard twigs only, so open that I could see the eggs from the ground, and also so slight that I could scarcely get to it without upsetting it. The bulk of the nest was six inches over; the ring of the concavity three quarters of an inch thick, but irregular. At first, seeing the bird fly off, I thought it an unfinished nest.

On June 9 he was rejoiced by finding a nest of the rose-breasted grosbeak: —

It was ten feet high up in a young bass, and had four eggs in it, — green, spotted with brown, the larger end of some almost all brown. The whole nest was six to eight inches in diameter, and about four inches high;

the inside diameter about three inches, and its inside depth two inches. The outside was built of coarser weed-stems, and some climbing herbaceous vine; the rest was made of finer brown weed-stems, at last quite fine like root-fibres within. The male bird was on the nest, and when scared off kept within three or four feet. The eggs were fresh.

By the lake in a scarlet oak eight feet up, I found a pigeon's nest like the former one, but more stable, containing one young bird three inches long, of a dirty yellowish and leaden color, with pinfeathers, and with a great bill, bare at the base, and a blackish tip. Another young bird slipped to the ground, fluttering as if wounded, two or three times, as she went off amid the shrubs.

One afternoon, going over to the Old Prairie Fort, he found a nighthawk's nest with two eggs in it, "well advanced toward hatching." The loons "are said to nest in old muskrat houses, and elsewhere around Lake Harriet"; where, on June 9, he had finally found the *Pyrus coronaria*, or wild apple tree. Of this he says: —

They have a long tap-root going down into the clay beneath; I could not pull up a small one. One or two hundred trees were there, and among them the yellow lady's-slipper.

It was in this region that Thoreau tested the unusual faculty of scent which he possessed, and

which made tobacco and other common odors offensive to him. He says: —

> Going over a low hill which had its wood cut off a year or two since (and the fire had run over it afterward), I stooped to pluck a flower, and smelled the spring fragrance I have so often perceived here, but now stronger and nearer than ever. So, going on and breaking off plants that were freshly leaved and vigorously growing, and smelling at them, I found at last a square-stemmed one which yielded the strong anise scent that I had noticed, especially when bruised. But then it was far from being so agreeable as when perceived floating in the air. This seems to be the *Lophanthus anisatus*, which must yield the fragrance mentioned. Parry calls it "a characteristic northwestern species." [Now known as *Agastache Fœniculum*, fragrant giant hyssop.]

Of these species Thoreau made long lists, which may be found in the story of his last Journey printed by the Boston Bibliophile Society. As numbered, they count up to more than a hundred, with mention of the places where he found them.

His excursion on the Frank Steele to Redwood on the Minnesota River was more closely described than that up the Mississippi, but it furnished him little new knowledge about the Indians; for he gave but one day to Redwood, either

from frugality of expense or from failing health — perhaps exhausted by his weeks around St. Anthony and the twin cities.

Scenes on the Long and Crooked River (*June 17–23*)

June 17, 6 P.M. We start up the Minnesota River in the Frank Steele. Till nine o'clock the river valley very broad between the bluffs and hills. The banks are some six feet high, with much handsome but weedy grass, mixed with roses; but they soon slope to low, wet and reedy meadows, or shallow lagoons behind the river, which is some ten rods wide, fringed with black willows. The large trees occasionally were cottonwood and elm. The cottonwood is shaped somewhat like our ash. At 9 P.M. we are near Shakopee.

At five in the morning we are said to be in the big woods; all alive with pigeons, and they flying across our course. Here the river is often only eight rods wide and quite snaggy. About 7.30 we pass a beautiful open intervale of native grass on the right; many *Erigerons* in the grass. Many large turtle-tracks on the shore. Muddy-looking water, with soft-shelled and snapping turtles in it. Swallows, kingfishers, blue jays and warbling vireos along the shores, and in the river some young ducks. See a turkey-buzzard and blue herons. The black willows are often quite tall (35 feet) slender and straight too. The small *Salix longifolia* is beneath it, quite common, and there is a dense growth of upright weeds. Very crooked stream; acres of roses in the intervale. We often strike the shore with our stern, or

stop and back to get round snags and bars. Grapevines in blossom are climbing on the cottonwood. Note the big wood near Henderson. Usually these woods are fringed with low intervale and meadow behind. Great bends in this river; by the channel as we sail it is 250 or 300 miles from St. Paul to Redwood, but not more than 120 by land in a straight line. It is good sailing from New Ulm, a German settlement, for some distance. We reach Fort Ridgely by evening. Much more bare bluff and plain to-day. La Hontan spoke of a great river coming in from the west, like this; it is indeed very long and navigable. The navigation is very novel to me. The water is rather low now; it has been 15 feet higher. In making a short turn round a bend, we often and designedly run into the steep and soft bank, taking in a cartload of earth. This fetches us about quicker than the rudder could. There was not a straight reach a mile long; generally you could not see a quarter-mile ahead, and our boat was constantly turning this way or that. At the Traverse des Sioux, some passengers were landed and walked across the neck of the isthmus, to be taken in on the other side, after the boat had sailed from one to three miles round.

The deep water was often so narrow and close to the shore that I could pluck almost any plant on the bank from the boat. New Ulm was the last of the little settlements, 100 miles south of Redwood. We left the Germans there 100 barrels of salt, which will be at a higher price when the water is lowest. Our boat was 160 feet long and drew three feet of water only, often

water and sand. We frequently got aground, and then drew ourselves along by a windlass and a cable hitched to a tree. Sometimes we swung round and blocked up the stream, one end of the boat resting on each shore. Once we ran into a concealed rock with a great shock; and the mate went below with a lamp, expecting to find a hole, but did not. Snags and sawyers were common; but so long as our boiler did not burst, no serious accident was likely to happen.

Redwood, when we got there on the 20th, at the Lower Sioux Agency, was a mere locality, scarcely an Indian village, with a storehouse and some houses for the Indians. Landing, we were fairly on the great bare plains. Looking south, and walking three miles in that direction, we could see no tree in that horizon. The buffalo was said to be feeding within twenty-five or thirty miles, but we saw none.

A regular Council was held on the 20th of June, and continued for three days, but our boat only waited a little more than a day. The Indians had come in on their ponies, and speeches were made on both sides; the Indians having the advantage in truth and earnestness, as usual. The most prominent Sioux chief was Little Crow. In the afternoon the half-naked Indians gave a dance at the request of the Governor of Minnesota, for our amusement and their profit. In it were 30 men dancing, and twelve musicians with drums; others struck their arrows against their bows. Some dancers blew flutes and kept good time, moving their feet or their shoulders, — sometimes one, sometimes both. They wore no shirts.

Thoreau does not seem to have been so much interested in these Indians as in those of Maine. Almost the only mention of them except the above was to describe their way of lighting their pipes. He had a friend, an "Illinois man," on the steamer who gave him this recipe: —

> Indian strikefire: Take a little punk, — the Illinois man says from the white maple, — and hold it flat against a flint; then strike across the edge with a steel ring, and put the ignited punk in the pipe.

It was hardly worth coming two hundred and fifty miles to learn so little as this. Five bands of Indians had come in on June 20, the day of the dance, and were feasted on an ox, cut into five parts, one for each band. That night the steamer, on her return trip, lay halfway between Redwood and Fort Ridgely, and on the 21st lay half the night fifteen miles above Mankato, near which was the rock on which the boat struck. On the 22d they reached Red Wing and there botanized for a few days, while awaiting letters from Concord. Thoreau says: —

> At Red Wing, sixty-four miles below St. Paul on the Mississippi, I was told that a hundred rattlesnakes a day could have been killed about Barn Bluff, six or seven years ago. They were very thick on the hillsides then — three kinds in all, my informant said. Yet

nobody had been killed that he knew of, though several were bitten. They were made sick for some time — a squaw there, for instance, the very last summer.

It does not appear that Thoreau saw a rattlesnake during his tour, though so much on the prairie and about the lakes.

June 26. At two P.M. We leave Red Wing in the War Eagle for Prairie du Chien, some 200 miles distant. Mrs. Upham, of Clinton, is with us; she has a cousin at Bedford near Concord. Our steamer draws two and one-half feet of water. The grand feature hereabout is the Mississippi River. Too much can hardly be said of its grandeur, and of the beauty of this portion of it from Rock Island to Red Wing. St. Paul is near the head of uninterrupted navigation on the main stream, about 2000 miles from its mouth. It is almost as wide in the upper as in the lower part of its course. Thus it flows from the pine to the palm. We reached Prairie du Chien down the Mississippi, about 3 A.M., June 27. Thence by cars to Milwaukee across Wisconsin, and there embarked on a steamer for Mackinaw. Milwaukee, of all the settled places, has the best harbor on Lake Michigan. The lake is ninety miles wide, and we cannot see across it; but we see the land loom sometimes, on each side from our steamer in the middle. We reached Mackinaw at 2 A.M. on June 30.

Thoreau remained in Mackinaw resting, observing, botanizing, and querying, for five days.

The summer there was cold, and he sat by his fire, July 2, at the "Mackinaw House" chatting with one person and another about the climate and customs of the region, as his custom was wherever he might be. The ice in those upper lake waters forms, he finds, about the middle of January, and lasts till May; indeed, in June, "quite recently," ice had been seen at a bend of Lake Superior. He got away from this chilly northwest passage, July 4, spent Sunday at Toronto, sailed for Ogdensburg on the 8th, and thence by rail he came through Vermont and New Hampshire to Concord, — fatigued, and after a shorter absence than he had planned. Five weeks later, he wrote to Daniel Ricketson: —

I returned a few weeks ago, after a good deal of steady travelling, considerably, yet not essentially better. I will pay you a visit next week, and take such rides and sauntering walks as an invalid may.

CHAPTER XIII

VILLAGE SKETCHES, CHIEFLY FROM THE JOURNALS

The Fire in the Woods of April, 1844

THE most serious offence that Thoreau ever gave to the farmers and landowners of his native town was on Town-Meeting Day, in April, 1844, when he was six-and-twenty; and, according to their view of his rights and obligations, should have been making speeches, or voting on motions for the raising of taxes, and debating appropriations for town expenses. Instead of this, he and his younger companion, Edward Hoar, one of the three sons of the village magnate, jurist, and former Congressman, Samuel Hoar, were spending the day on the Sudbury River, and meant to explore its sources before they returned. Edward Hoar was in Harvard College, and graduated that year. Thoreau had graduated seven years earlier, had been teaching school and writing a book; but his latest occupation had been to assist his father in digging a cellar and building a house in the village corner known as "Texas." Some years afterward he wrote this story of the day's adventures,

but never published it; so that the date was rather in dispute, when, long after his death, it appeared in the "Atlantic Monthly." Here it is, with comments: —

I once set fire to the woods. Having set out, one April day, to go to the sources of Concord River in a boat, with a single companion, meaning to camp on the bank at night, or seek a lodging in some neighboring country inn or farmhouse, we took fishing-tackle with us, that we might fitly procure our food from the stream, Indian-like. At the shoemaker's near the river we obtained a match, which we had forgotten.

(Where they took boat is not remembered. It was not the boat in which John and Henry made their voyage of 1839, for that had been made over to Hawthorne at the Old Manse, who was making in it those fishing-trips with Ellery Channing which are commemorated in the "Mosses" by Hawthorne. When Hawthorne left Concord, he gave the boat over to Channing, in whose hands it remained Channing was himself in New York at this time, and was soon to meet Thoreau in Berkshire and make a trip with him to the Catskills.)

Though it was thus early in the spring, the river was low, for there had not been much rain; and we succeeded in catching a mess of fish sufficient for our dinner before we had left the town; and by the shores

of Fair Haven Pond we proceeded to cook them. The earth was uncommonly dry, and our fire, kindled far from the woods in a sunny recess in the hillside on the east of the pond, suddenly caught the dry grass of the previous year which grew about the stump on which it was kindled.

We sprang to extinguish it, at first with our hands and feet, and then we fought it with a board obtained from the boat; but in a few minutes it was beyond our reach. Being on the side of a hill, it spread rapidly upward, through the long, dry, wiry grass interspersed with bushes. "Well, where will this end?" asked my companion. I saw that it might be bounded by Well Meadow Brook on one side; but would perchance go to the village side of that brook. "It will go to town," I answered. While my companion took the boat back down the river, I set out through the woods, to inform the owners, and to raise the town.

The fire had already spread a dozen rods on every side, and went leaping and crackling wildly and irreclaimably toward the wood. That way went the flames with wild delight; and we felt that we had no control over the demonic creature to which we had given birth. We had kindled many fires in the woods before, — burning a clear space in the grass, — without ever kindling such a fire as this.

As I ran toward the town through the woods, I could see the smoke over the woods behind me marking the spot and the progress of the flames. The first farmer whom I met (driving a team), after leaving the woods, inquired the cause of the smoke. I told him.

"Well," said he, "it is none of my stuff," and drove along. The next I met was the owner in his field, with whom I returned at once to the woods, running all the way. I had already run two miles. When at length we got into the neighborhood of the flames, we met a carpenter who had been hewing timber, an infirm man, who had been driven off by the fire, fleeing with his axe. The farmer returned to hasten more assistance. I, who was spent with running, remained. What could I do alone against a front of flame half a mile wide?

(The farmer must have been Deacon W., who owned many acres of woodland in the low plateau between Fair Haven Pond and Fair Haven Cliff. Much of it had been cut over the previous winter, and there were said to be 100 cords ready for market, worth, even at the prices of that day, from $300 to $450. Many good trees were left standing, whose value the fire would greatly injure, if not destroy. Other owners had adjoining woodlots, and which would be swept and which spared by the blaze, nobody could say. The course then taken by the unlucky cause of the calamity, was probably the wisest he could take. He had given notice, and the villagers were coming to the rescue.)

I walked slowly through the wood [and up a tall hill] to Fair Haven Cliff, climbed to the highest rock, and sat down upon it to observe the progress of the flames, which were rapidly approaching me, now about a mile

distant from the spot where the fire was kindled. Presently I heard the sound of the distant bell giving the alarm, and I knew that the town was on its way to the scene. Hitherto I had felt like a guilty person — nothing but shame and regret. But now I settled the matter with myself shortly. I said to myself: "Who are these men who are said to be the owners of these woods, and how am I related to them? I have set fire to the forest; but I have done no wrong therein; and now it is as if the lightning had done it. These flames are but consuming their natural food."

(It has never troubled me from that day to this more than if the lightning had done it. The trivial fishing was all that disturbed me, and disturbs me still.) So shortly I settled it with myself, and stood to watch the approaching flames. It was a glorious spectacle, and I was the only one there to enjoy it. The fire now reached the base of the Cliff, and then rushed up its sides. The squirrels ran before it in blind haste, and three pigeons dashed into the midst of the smoke. The flames flashed up the pines to their tops, as if they were powder. When I found I was about to be surrounded by the fire, I retreated, and joined the forces now arriving from the town.

It took us several hours to surround the flames with our hoes and shovels and by back fires subdue them. In the midst of all I saw the farmer whom I first met, who had turned indifferently away, saying it was none of his stuff, striving earnestly to save his corded wood, — his stuff, — which the fire had already seized, and which it after all consumed.

It burned over one hundred acres or more, and destroyed much young wood. When I returned home late in the day, with others of my townsmen, I could not help noticing that the crowd, who were so ready to condemn the individual who had kindled the fire, did not sympathize with the owners of the wood, but were in fact highly elate, and, as it were, thankful for the opportunity which had afforded them so much sport; and it was only half a dozen owners (so called), though not all of them, who looked sour or grieved, and I felt that I had a deeper interest in the woods, knew them better, and should feel their loss more, than any or all of them. The farmer whom I had first conducted to the woods was obliged to ask me the shortest way back, through his own lot.

Why, then, should the half-dozen owners and the individuals who set the fire alone feel sorrow for the loss of the wood, while the rest of the town have their spirits raised? Some of the owners, however, bore their loss like men; but other some declared, behind my back, that I was a "damned rascal"; and a flibbertigibbet or two, who crowed like the old cock, shouted some reminiscences of "burnt woods" from safe recesses, for some years after. I have had nothing to say to any of them. The locomotive engine has since burned over nearly all the same ground and more; and in some measure blotted out the memory of the previous fire. To be sure, I felt a little ashamed when I reflected on what a trivial occasion this had happened — that at the time I was no better employed than my townsmen.

That night I watched the fire, where some stumps still flamed at midnight in the midst of the blackened waste; wandering through the woods by myself; and far in the night I threaded my way to the spot where the fire had taken, and discovered the now broiled fish, — which had been dressed, — scattered over the burnt grass.

When the lightning burns the forest, its Director makes no apology to man; and I was but His agent. Perhaps we owe to this accident partly some of the noblest natural parks. It is inspiriting to walk amid the fresh green sprouts of grass and of shrubbery pushing upward through the charred surface with more vigorous growth.

This is probably the most important transaction between Thoreau and his townsmen during his first thirty years. It had something to do with his retirement to the Walden woods the next year (1845), and it left shades of regret and animosity in certain families for years; and in Thoreau's own just soul more remorse than he here expresses. I have been told that the fact of Edward Hoar's being equally guilty (or innocent) with himself prevented following up the accident with a legal prosecution. So utterly had it been generally forgotten, twelve years after, when I became a resident of the town, that I never heard a whisper of it till this passage was found among his manu-

scripts, and printed in the "Atlantic." But for the seventy years since the locomotives have been scattering sparks through the Concord woods, such forest fires have been of frequent occurrence, and have called out the help of Emersons, Thoreaus, Channings, and everybody else to check them. I saw Thoreau plant for Emerson, his Walden beanfield with pine trees, and fifty years later I saw a forest fire from the railroad destroy most of them.

George Minott, a Poetical Farmer

Minott is perhaps the most poetical farmer, who most realizes to me the poetry of the farmer's life, that I know. He does nothing with haste and drudgery, but as if he loved it. He makes the most of his labor, and takes infinite satisfaction in every part of it. He is not looking forward to the sale of his crops, or any pecuniary profit, but is paid by the constant satisfaction which his labor yields him. He has not too much land to trouble him, — too much work to do, — no hired man nor boy; but simply to amuse himself and live. He cares not so much to raise a large crop as to do his work well. Farming is an amusement which has lasted him longer than gunning or fishing. He is never in a hurry to get his garden planted; and yet it is always planted soon enough, and none in the town is kept so beautifully clean.

He handles and amuses himself with every ear of his corn crop as much as a child with his playthings; and

so his small crop goes a great way. The seed of weeds is no longer in his soil. He loves to walk in a swamp in windy weather and hear the wind groan through the pines. He indulges in no luxury of food or dress or furniture, — yet he is not penurious, but merely simple. If his sister dies before him, he may have to go to the almshouse in his old age; yet he is not poor, for he does not want riches. With never-failing rheumatism and trembling hands, he seems yet to enjoy perennial health.

Though he never reads a book, — since he has finished the "Naval Monument," — he speaks the best of English. He used the word "gavel" to describe a parcel of stalks cast on the ground to dry. His are good old English words, and I am always sure to find them in the Dictionary, though I never heard them before in my life.

This was written in October, 1851; in 1856 he added this: —

Minott said he saw Emerson come home from lecturing the other day with his "knitting-bag" (lecture-bag) in his hand. He asked him if the lecturing business was as good as it used to be. Emerson said he did n't see but it was as good as ever; guessed the people would want lectures "as long as he or I lived."

March 19, 1861, Thoreau wrote to Daniel Ricketson: —

You remember Minott's cottage on the hillside near Emerson's? The little gray hip-roofed cottage was

occupied at the beginning of February, this year, by George Minott and his sister Mary, respectively seventy-eight and eighty years old, and Miss Potter seventy-four. These had been permanent occupants for many years. Minott had been on his last legs for some time; at last off his legs, expecting weekly to take his departure, — a burden to himself and friends, — yet dry and natural as ever. His sister took care of him, and supported herself and family with her needle, as usual. He lately willed his little property to her, as a slight compensation for her care. February 13, their sister, eighty-six or eighty-seven, who lived across the way, died. Miss Minott had taken cold in visiting her, and was so sick that she could not go to her funeral. She herself died of lung fever on the 18th (which was said to be the same disease that her sister had), having just willed her property back to George, and added her own mite to it. Miss Potter, too, had now become ill, — too ill to attend the funeral, — and she died of the same disease on the 23d. All departed as gently as the sun goes down, leaving George alone.

I called to see him the other day, the 27th of February, — a remarkably pleasant spring day, — and as I was climbing the sunny slope to his strangely deserted house, I heard the first bluebirds upon the elm that hangs over it. They had come as usual though some who used to hear them were gone. Even Minott had not heard them, for he was thinking of other things. Perhaps there will be a time when the birds themselves will not return any more.

I hear that George, sitting on the side of his bed, a

few days after this, called out to his niece, who had come to take care of him, and was in the next room, — to know if she did not feel lonely? "Yes, I do," said she. "So do I," added he. He said he was like an old oak, all shattered and decaying. "I am sure, Uncle," said his niece, "you are not much like an oak." "I mean," said he, "that I am like an oak or any other tree, inasmuch as I cannot stir from where I am."

George Minott was the nephew of that Captain Minott who was the second husband of Mary Jones, Thoreau's grandmother, in whose farmhouse Henry was born. He (George) was Thoreau's "Old Man of Verona"; and Channing, who called him "Angelo," had much to say of him; describing him as "native and to the manor born, who was never away from home but once, when he was drafted as a soldier in the last war with England, and went to Dorchester Heights."

George Melvin and the Pink Azalea

Equally keen as a sportsman, but not so estimable in character, was George Melvin, with whom Thoreau had much intercourse, and by whom he was introduced to the *Azalea nudiflora*, in the woods on the Lee Farm, which in Thoreau's time had been the estate of Major Barrett, and then of a New York broker named Wheeler, whom

Thoreau did not admire. He thus describes, in May, 1853, this incident of the azalea, and his puzzle over it: —

Some incidents in my life have been more allegorical than actual. That is, I have been more impressed by their allegorical significance and fitness; they have been like myths or passages in a myth, rather than mere incidents of history which have to wait to become significant. (Quite in harmony with my subjective philosophy.)

This, for instance: that when I thought I knew the flowers so well, the beautiful purple azalea or pinxter-flower should be shown me by [Melvin] the hunter who found it. Such facts are lifted quite above the level of the actual; perfectly in keeping with my life and character. Ever and anon something will occur which my philosophy has not dreamed of. The boundaries of the actual are no more fixed and rigid than the elasticity of our imaginations. The fact that a rare and beautiful flower which we never saw, perhaps never heard of, — for which, therefore, there was no place in our thoughts, — may at length be found in our immediate neighborhood, is very suggestive.[1]

[1] The tone here savors a little of mortification that others should know more of rare flowers than himself, the one special botanist of the town. Miss H. reported the same thing about the hepatica which she showed him; and the Emerson children about the flower of the Linnæa, which they found in the park. Of the characters in this village drama, Stedman Buttrick and F. R. Gourgas were Democratic officials; George Brooks and his father were Whig leaders; and Mrs. Brooks the head of the anti-slavery women.

May 31, 1853.

Afternoon. I am going in search of the *Azalea nudiflora.* Sophia brought home a single flower from Mrs. Brooks's last evening, who has a large twig in a vase of water, still pretty fresh, which she says George Melvin gave to her son George Brooks. I called at his office. He says that Melvin came in to Mr. Francis Gourgas's office, where he and others were sitting, Saturday evening, with his arms full, and gave each a sprig, but he doesn't know where he got it. Somebody, I heard, had seen it at Captain Jarvis's; so I went there. I found they had some, still pretty fresh, in the house. Melvin gave it to them Saturday night, but they did not know where he got it. A young man at Stedman Buttrick's said it was a secret; there was only one bush in the town; Melvin knew of it, and Stedman knew; when asked, Melvin said he got it in the swamp, or from a bush, etc.

The young man thought it grew on the Island across the Assabet on the Wheeler Farm. I went on to Melvin's house, though I did not expect to find him at home at this hour, so early in the afternoon. At length I saw his dog by the door, and knew he was at home. He was sitting in the shade, bareheaded, at the back door. He had a large pailful of the azalea, recently plucked, and in the shade behind his house; which he said he was going to carry to town at evening. He had also a sprig set out. He had been out all the forenoon, and said he had got seven pickerel, perhaps ten. Apparently he had been drinking, and was just getting

over it. At first he was a little shy about telling me where the azalea grew; but I saw that I should get it out of him. He dilly-dallied a little; called to his neighbor, Jacob Farmer (whom he called "Razor"), to know if he could tell me where that flower grew. He called it, by the way, the "red honeysuckle." This was to prolong the time and make the most of his secret.

I felt pretty sure the plant was to be found on the Wheeler Farm, beyond the river, as the young man had said; for I had remembered how, some weeks before this, when I went up the Assabet after the yellow rocket, I saw Melvin, who had just crossed with his dog; and when I landed, to pluck the rocket, he appeared out of the woods, said he was after a fishpole, and asked me the name of my flower. Did n't think it was very handsome, — "not so handsome as the honeysuckle, is it?" And now I knew it was his "red honeysuckle" and not the columbine he meant.

Well, I told him he had better tell me where it was; I was a botanist, and ought to know. But he thought I could not possibly find it by his directions. I told him he'd better tell me and have the glory of it, for I should surely find it if he did n't; I'd got a clue to it, and should n't give it up. I should go over the river for it. "I can smell it a good way, you know." He thought I could smell it half a mile; and he wondered that I or Channing had n't stumbled on it. "Channing did come close by it once, when it was in flower, and I thought he'd surely find it then; but he did n't, and I said nothing to him." He told me he found it about ten years ago, and went to it every year since. "It blossoms at

the old election time, last o' May, and is the handsomest flower that grows."

In the meanwhile Farmer, who was hoeing, came up to the wall, and we fell into a talk about Dodge's Brook, near by, which runs through his farm. A man in Cambridge, he said, had lately written to old Mr. Monroe (a neighbor) about it, but he did n't know why. All he did know about the brook was that he had seen it dry, and then again, after a week of dry weather, it would be full again; and either the Cambridge man or Monroe said there were only two such brooks in all North America. One of its sources — he said the principal one — is in his land. We all went to it. It was in a meadow, rather a dry one, once a swamp. He said it never ceased to flow at this head now, since he dug it out; and never froze there. Farmer ran a pole down eight or nine feet into the mud, to show me the depth. He had minnows there in a large, deep pool, and he cast an insect into the water, which they presently rose to and swallowed. Fifteen years ago he dug it out nine feet deep, and found there spruce logs as big as his leg, which the beavers had gnawed, with the marks of their teeth very distinct upon them; but they soon crumbled away on coming to the air.[1]

[1] This conversation, very well and colloquially reported, is typical of hundreds such that Thoreau held with the farmers, laborers, and sportsmen of Concord and its region. "Old Mr. Monroe" was the person who introduced skilful pencil-making into Concord; he was then living near Jacob Farmer's farm, which was in a hamlet where there had been a hatter's shop, a shoemaker's, the good brick house of the Hildreths, and George Melvin's homely abode. Later it was the site of a schoolhouse, and Mr. Farmer was the

Melvin, meanwhile, was telling me of a pair of geese he had seen which were breeding in the Bedford Cedar Swamp; he had seen them within a day. Last year he got a large brood of black ducks there, — eleven, he said. Melvin and I and his dog went on down the brook, and crossed the Assabet in his boat, and he conducted me to where the *Azalea nudiflora* grew, — it was a little past its prime, perhaps, — and showed me how near Channing came to it. ("You won't tell him what I said, will you?") I offered to pay him for his trouble, but he would n't take anything. "I'd just as lief you'd know as not." It is a conspicuously beautiful flowering shrub, with the sweet fragrance of the common swamp-pink; but the flowers are larger, and in this case, a fine, lively rosy pink, not so clammy as the other; and, being earlier, it is free from the insects which often infest and spoil the first. Growing in the shade of large wood, like the laurel, with a broader, somewhat downy pale green leaf. Melvin says the gray squirrel nests are made of leaves, the red squirrel's of pine stuff. Jarvis tells me that Stedman Buttrick once hired Melvin to work for him, on condition that he should not take his gun into the field; but he had known him to do so when Buttrick was away, and

resident committeeman. At a school examination where I was present officially, as secretary of the School Committee of 1859, when Mr. Alcott was our School Superintendent, I heard Jacob Farmer make this speech: "Children, we were here a year ago, and we looked over your writin' books; and we thought some flies had got into your inkstands, and crawled over your books. We've been looking at your books to-day, and we conclude that you've catched them flies."

earn two or three dollars with his game, beside his day's work; but of course that was neglected.

June 10, 1853. What shall this great wild tract over which Channing and I strolled to-day be called? Many farmers have pastures there, and woodlots and orchards. It consists mainly of rocky pastures. It contains what I call the Boulder Field, the Yellow Birch Swamp, the Black Birch Hill, the Laurel Pasture, the Hog Pasture, the White Pine Grove, the Easterbrooks Place, the Old Lime Kiln, the Lime Quarries, Spruce Swamp, the Ermine Weasel Woods; also the Oak Meadows, the Cedar Swamp, the Kibbe Place, and the old place northwest of Brooks Clark's. Ponkawtassett bounds it on the south. There are a few frog-ponds and an old mill-pond within it, and Bateman's Pond on its edge. Channing proposes to call it the *Melvin Preserve*, for it is favorite hunting-ground with George Melvin. It is a sort of Robin Hood Ground. The old Carlisle Road, which runs through the middle of it, is bordered on each side with wild apple pastures, where the trees stand without order, having sprung up by accident, or from pomace sown at random, and are for the most part concealed by birches and pines. Many of these apple-trees, growing as forest trees, bear good crops. It is a paradise for walkers in the fall. It would make a princely estate in Europe; yet it is owned by farmers who live by the labor of their hands, and do not esteem it much.

This was written in 1853. Four years later, he still called it "Melvin's Preserve," and there met

Melvin, not gunning nor fishing, but nutting and barberrying.

Oct. 20, 1857. He had got two baskets, one in each hand, and his game-bag, which hung from his neck, all full of nuts and barberries; and his mouth full of tobacco. Trust him to find where the nuts and berries grow. He is hunting all the year, and he marks the bushes and the trees which are fullest; and when the time comes, for once he leaves his gun, though not his dog, at home, and takes his baskets to the spot. It is pleasanter to me to meet him with his gun or his baskets, than to meet some portly caterer for a family, basket on arm, at the stalls of Quincy Market in Boston.

What a wild and rich domain that Easterbrooks Country! Think of the miles of huckleberries, and of barberries and of wild apples, so fair both in flower and fruit, resorted to by men and beasts! There are barberry bushes or clumps there, behind which I could actually pick two bushels of berries, without being seen by you on the other side. And they are not all picked at last, by all creatures together. I walk for two or three miles, and still the clumps of barberries, — great sheaves with their wreaths of scarlet fruit, — show themselves before me and on every side; seeming to issue from the pines and other trees, as if it were they that were promenading there, not I. Melvin tells me that S. thinks he heard a wildcat scream in Ebby Hubbard's Wood, by the Close.

My own relations were not very close either with George Melvin or with George Minott,—

the double *t* in this name seems to be optional, for it is written both ways. But I was introduced to two of the cronies of Thoreau and Channing by one or both of my new friends, when I first went to live in Channing's house, and to dine daily with Thoreau. One of these was Ebby Hubbard, just mentioned, aged owner of some of the finest oak and pine forest in Concord, of whom they told me I should buy the best white-oak cordwood — as I did, for fuel in Channing's stoves. The other was Michael Flannery, industrious Irishman from Kerry, who would honestly saw it for me, and do any other work I needed; and whom I continued to employ for twenty years. Hubbard was another type of the old farmer from either George Minott or Jacob Farmer; he was a crooked, crusty old curmudgeon, seldom seen except in a blue frock, and living in one of the oldest village houses, with a carpenter's shop attached, in which he seemed to pass most of the time he was not working in the open air, cutting or carting wood from his park, near Walden; which was a favorite walk of Emerson and his children, and was bought by his daughter Mrs. Forbes, to prevent the cutting-off of noble trees, — so that it is still, in verity, a preserved park. Penurious as he was, Mr. Hubbard left by will one thousand dollars toward a

monument to the patriots in the Concord Fight, to be placed on the Concord River bank where they actually stood when they

"Fired the shot heard round the world."

This bequest was the nest-egg out of which was hatched the world-famed statue of the Minute Man by French.

Flannery, on the other hand, was the spade-laborer who took the prize at the cattle show, and had it taken away from him by his employer, another Concord farmer; which so incensed Thoreau that he collected the sum among his neighbors and paid it to Mike, whom the Thoreaus ever afterward befriended. When Sophia left Concord to live and die in Bangor, among her cousins, she gave me a small note of hand, which Flannery had signed for money lent him in some pinch, with instructions to receive payment if he was able to pay, but in any case to give him up the note, which I did. This is a sample, one of many, of the relations of the Thoreaus with the poor; and those of Channing, though more capricious, were no less generous.

A Fluvial Walk in the Assabet Stream

The Concord River is formed by the confluence, at the promontory of Egg Rock, of the Assabet,

or North Branch, sometimes called by Thoreau the "North River," and the longer and more navigable Sudbury River, in which, under Lee's Cliff, and lying between Baker Farm and Conantum, is Fair Haven Pond, a bay or widening of the stream. For sailing, the Sudbury answered best, but for rowing and retirement, the Assabet; in itself also more picturesque, and in Thoreau's time little defiled by sewage or the waste of woolen factories. It was so little boated then, except by Thoreau and Hawthorne or Channing, that it gave quiet bathing in three or four places of deep water. At one point, behind the Indian Hill which Thoreau carefully spells "Nawshawtuct," is a ford at which these walkers crossed it in going to the more distant Anursnack, and if it were summer, we often stripped for a bath, carrying our clothes across to the northwestern shore, and dressing there for the farther walk. On July 10, 1852, a very hot day, Thoreau and Channing set forth "to the North River in front of Major Barrett's." This village magnate, who had been State Treasurer, and had hired Alcott as a haymaker, had owned the great Lee farm, now broken up into homesteads and pastures. The Journal of that date now goes on: —

The long, narrow, open intervals in the woods near the Assabet are quite dry now. One of these meadows, a quarter-mile long by a few rods wide, narrow and winding and bounded on all sides by maples, is a very attractive place to walk in. We undressed on the south side, carried our clothes down in the stream a considerable distance, and finally bathed in earnest from the opposite side. The heat tempted us to prolong this luxury. I think I never felt the water so warm, yet it was not disagreeably so. The river has here a sandy bottom, and is quite shallow. I made quite an excursion up and down in it — a fluvial walk. It seemed the properest highway for this weather; now in water a foot or two deep, now suddenly descending through valleys up to my neck, but all alike agreeable. When I had left the river and walked in the woods for some time, then jumped into the river again, I was surprised to find how warm it was, — as it seemed to me, almost warm enough to boil eggs, — like water that has stood in a kettle over a fire.

There are many interesting objects of study as you walk up and down a clear river like this, in the water, where you can see every inequality in the bottom, and every object on it. There are weeds on the bottom which remind you of the sea, — the radical leaves of the "Floating-heart," which I have never seen mentioned; very large, five inches long and four wide, dull claret, and green where freshest, pellucid, with waved edges, in large tufts or dimples on the bottom. It is also scored by clams moving about, with furrows sometimes a rod long; and always the clam lies at one

end. So this fish can change its position and get into deeper and cooler water. I was in doubt before whether the clam made these furrows; but these, which were very numerous, had living clams at the end.

There are but few fishes to be seen. They have, no doubt, retreated to the deepest water. In a muddier place, close to the shore, I came upon an old pout cruising with her young. She dashed away at my approach, but the fry remained. They were of various sizes from a third of an inch to an inch and a half long, — quite black and pout-shaped, except that the head was most developed in the smallest. They were constantly moving about in a circular or rather lenticular school, fifteen or eighteen inches in diameter; and I estimated there were at least a thousand. Presently the old pout came back and took the lead of her brood, which followed her, or rather gathered about her, like chickens round a hen; but this mother had so many children she did n't know what to do. Her maternal yearnings must be on a great scale. When one half of her divided school found her out, they came down upon her and completely invested her like a small cloud. She was soon joined by another smaller pout, apparently her mate; and all, both old and young, began to be very familiar with me; they came round my legs and felt them with their feelers, and the old pouts nibbled my toes, while the fry half concealed my feet. Probably if I had been standing on the bank with my clothes on they would have been more shy. Ever and anon the old pouts dashed aside to drive away a passing bream or perch. The larger one kept

circling about her charge, as if to keep them together. The young pouts are protected thus for a season by the old. Some had evidently been hatched before the others.

I wonder if any Roman emperor ever indulged in such luxury as this? walking up and down a river in torrid weather, with only a hat to shade the head. What were the baths of Caracalla to this? Now we traverse a long water-plain, some two feet deep: now we descend into a darker river-valley, where the bottom is lost sight of; now we go over a hard iron pan, now we stoop, and go under a low bough of the *Salix nigra;* now we slump into soft mud amid the pads of the *Nymphæa odorata,* at this hour shut. On this road there is no other traveller to turn out for. We finally return to the dry land, and recline in the shade of an apple tree on a bank overlooking the meadow.

July 12, 2 P.M. Now for another fluvial walk. There is always a current of air above the water, blowing up or down the course of the river; so that this is the coolest highway. Divesting yourself of all clothing but your shirt and hat, which are to protect you from the sun, you are prepared for the excursion. You choose what depths you like, tucking your toga higher or lower, as you take the deep middle of the road, or the shallow sidewalks. Here is a road where no dust was ever known, no intolerable drouth. Now your feet expand on a smooth sandy bottom, now contract timidly on pebbles, now slump in genial fatty mud, amid the pads. You scare out whole schools of small breams and perch, and sometimes a pickerel, which

have taken refuge from the sun under the pads. Or you meet with and interrupt a turtle, taking a more leisurely walk up the stream. Ever and anon you cross some furrow in the sand made by a muskrat, leading off to their galleries in the bank; and you thrust your foot into the entrance, which is just below the surface of the water, and strewn with grass and rushes, of which they make their nests. In shallow water near the shore your feet at once detect the presence of springs in the bank emptying in, by the sudden coldness of the water. There, if you are thirsty, you dig a little well in the sand with your hands, and when you return, after it has settled and clarified itself, you get a draught of pure cold water there.

It is an objection to walking in the mud, that from time to time you have to pick the leeches off you. I noticed a large snapping turtle on one of the dark-brown rocks in the middle of the river (apparently for coolness) in company with a painted tortoise, — so completely the color of the rock, that if it had not been for his head, curved upward to a point from anxiety, I should not have detected him. Thus Nature subjects them to the same circumstances with the stones, and paints them alike, as with one brush, for their safety. That this luxury of walking in the river may be perfect, it must be very warm, such as are few days even in this July; so that the breeze on those parts that have just been immersed may not produce the least chilliness.

Socrates, barefoot, paddling in the shallow Ilissus at Athens, was not more a philosopher

than this surveyor of the roads of clams and muskrats.

Family Memories

Like most of us, Henry Thoreau had a very mixed ancestry, which has not yet been traced very far back. His aunt Maria, the last American Thoreau, gave me by letter in 1878 the names of such forefathers as she had heard of in the eighteenth century, when she was herself born. Her great-grandmother Tillet, who seems to have been of Huguenot descent, married a Boston Quaker, David Orrok, and *her* daughter, Sarah Orrok, married a Scotchman from Stirlingshire named Burns, who died in Scotland. Jane Burns, his daughter, married the first American Thoreau in Boston (John, the grandfather of Henry), in 1781, and died there in 1796, leaving eight children, of whom Maria was the youngest. Jane Burns was born in 1754, the same year with her husband, who outlived her by five years, and died in Concord when his son John, father of Henry, was fourteen; who therefore remembered him well, as did Henry's aunt Elizabeth, who was older. On his mother's side Henry could trace descent farther back, through Joneses and Dunbars, of the Old Colony of Plymouth; but not, like his friend

John Brown, of Mayflower ancestry. The Tillets had been slave-owners, like many persons of property in Massachusetts before the Revolution; and by both sides Henry inherited traditions of gentility. His grandfather's cousin, John Thoreau, was an officer in the British army, and one of his grandmother's brothers, Jonas Jones, died as an officer of that army in England, after our Revolution. With this premised, I quote some of the memories preserved in the Journals: —

Jan. 23, 1858. Mrs. William Monroe [1] told Sophia last evening that she remembered our grandfather Thoreau very well; he was taller than Father, and used to ride out to their house when they made cheeses, to drink the whey. She was a Stone, and lived where she and her husband did afterward, now Darius Meriam's. She said she remembered Grandmother, too, Jennie Burns, — how she came to the schoolroom in Boston, once (perhaps in Middle Street), leading her little daughter Elizabeth, the latter so small that she could not tell her name distinctly, but spoke thick and lispingly, — "Elizabeth Orrok Thoreau."

Feb. 7, 1858. Aunt Louisa Dunbar has talked with Mrs. Monroe, and I can correct or add to my account. She says that she was then only three or four years old, and that she went to school somewhere in Boston, with

[1] This was the wife of "old Mr. Monroe" mentioned on pp. 211, 212, and the mother of William Monroe, who gave the library and art gallery to Concord.

Aunt Elizabeth and one other child, to a woman named Turner, who kept a spinning-wheel a-going while she taught these three little children. She remembers that one sat on a lignum-vitæ mortar, turned bottom upward, another on a box, and the third on a stool; and then she repeated the story of Jennie Burns bringing her little daughter to the school, as before.

Feb. 8. Mrs. Monroe says that her mother, Mrs. Stone, respected my grandfather Thoreau very much, because he was a religious man. She remembers his calling one day and inquiring where blue vervain grew, which he wanted to make a syrup for his cough; and she, a girl, happening to know, ran and gathered some.

October, 1856. Father told me about his father the other night, who died in 1801, aged forty-seven. When the Revolutionary war came on, he was apprentice or journeyman to a cooper in Boston, who employed many hands. He called them together and told them that, on account of the war, his business was ruined, and he had no more work for them. So my father thinks he went into privateering. Yet he remembers his telling him of being employed digging at some defences, when a cannon-ball came and sprinkled sand all over them.[1] After the war he went into business as

[1] This may have been at the earthworks thrown up around Boston here and there, after the Concord Fight, in which several of Henry's Jones uncles took part on the Tory side. The "cooper" was an outfitter for vessels, and it was the closing of the port of Boston by the British navy, before active hostilities, that ruined his business, and furnished the Colonies with experienced privateersmen. Mention has already been made of John Thoreau as a privateer; he laid the foundation of his small fortune in that sort of piracy, for he inherited nothing from his family in Jersey, save,

a merchant, commencing with a single hogshead of sugar. His shop was on Long Wharf. He was a short man, a little taller than Father, stout, and very strong for his size. Levi Melcher, a powerful man, who was his clerk or tender, used to tell my father that he did not believe himself so strong a man as Grandfather, who would never give in to him in handling a hogshead of molasses,—setting it on its head, or the like. Father remembers his father used to breakfast before the family at one time, and he with him, on account of his business. His father used to eat the undercrusts of biscuits, and the boy the upper.

Dec. 28, 1858. Father says that he and his sisters except Elizabeth, were born in a house in Richmond Street, Boston, between Salem and Hanover Streets, on the spot where a Bethel now stands, on the left hand going from Hanover Street. They had milk of a neighbor, who used to drive his cows to and from the Common every day. Aunt Jane says that she was born on Christmas Day, and they called her a Christmas gift. She remembers hearing that her aunt, Hannah Orrok, was so disconcerted by the event that she threw all the spoons outdoors, after she had washed them, or with the dishwater.

Feb. 3, 1859. After a sickness of some two years,

possibly, some advantages in his subsequent trading. His clerk, Levi Melcher, of an old New Hampshire family in Rockingham County, was one of my mother's uncles, whom I remember well. He made a fortune in the same business as John Thoreau did, and could he have been spared a few years longer, the Thoreaus might have been among the wealthy Boston families. His early death and his large family consumed his wealth, but his children inherited his frugality.

JANE THOREAU

going down town in pleasant weather, doing a little business from time to time, hoeing a little in the garden, etc., Father took to his chamber January 13, and did not come down again. He died five minutes before 3 P.M., February 3. Most of the time previously he had coughed and expectorated a great deal; latterly he did not cough. He continued to sit up in his chamber till within a week before he died. He sat up for a little while on the Sunday four days before he died. Generally he was very silent for many months. He was quite conscious to the last, and his death was so easy that we should not have been aware that he was dying, though we were sitting around his bed, if we had not watched very closely.

I have touched a body that was flexible and warm, yet tenantless — warmed by what fire? When the spirit that animated some matter has left it, who else, what else, can animate it? The matter which composed the body of our first human father still exists under another name. When in sickness the expression of the face in various ways is changed, you perceive unexpected resemblances to other members of the same family; as if within the same family there was greater general similarity in the framework of the face than in its filling up and clothing.

Father came to this town to live with his father and stepmother, just after the close of the last century, when he was upwards of twelve years old. Afterwards he went to the Lexington Academy a short time, perhaps a year; then into Deacon White's store as clerk; then learned the dry-goods business in a store in

Salem. Aunt Jane shows me a letter from him, directly after his going there, dated 1807. He was then with a Hathaway. He came of age in 1808, and soon after opened a store for himself, on the corner where the Town House now stands, in a yellow building since moved and altered into John Keyes's house. He did so well there that Isaac Hurd went into partnership with him, to his injury. They soon dissolved partnership, but could not settle without going to law, when my father gained his case, bringing his account books into court. Then, I think, he went to Bangor and "set up" with Billings, selling to the Indians among others; married here [1812], lived a while in Boston, wrote thence to the aunts at Bangor in 1815, with John on his knee. He moved to Concord, where I was born; then to Chelmsford, to Boston, to Concord again, — and here remained. Mother first came to Concord with her mother about the same age and time that Father did, but a little before him.[1]

As far as I know, Father, when he died, was not only one of the oldest men in the middle of Concord, but the one perhaps best acquainted with the inhabitants, and the local, social, and street history of the village for the last fifty years. He belonged in a peculiar sense to the village street; loved to sit in the shops or at the post-office, and read the daily papers. I think that he remembered more about the worthies (and unworthies) of

[1] We have more exact dates now than Henry had in noting down these facts in his father's life. The courts and the record of wills and mortgages supply us with the chronology. John Thoreau had married the widow Kettell, before migrating to Concord from the North End of Boston, in search of health, in 1800.

Concord Village, forty years ago — both from dealing as a trader, and from familiar intercourse with them — than any one else. Our neighbors, now living or very recently dead, have either come to the town more recently than he, or have lived more aloof from the mass of the inhabitants.

Writing to Daniel Ricketson, who had written that he much respected John Thoreau, and was "much impressed with his good sense, his fine social nature, and his genuine hospitality," Thoreau replied: —

I am glad to read what you say of his social nature. I think I may say that he was wholly unpretending. And there was this peculiarity in his aim, that though he had pecuniary difficulties to contend with the greater part of his life, he always studied how to make a *good* article, pencil or other (for he practised various arts) and was never satisfied with what he had produced. Nor was he ever disposed in the least to put off a poor one for the sake of pecuniary gain. As I sat in a circle the other evening with my mother and sister, my mother's two sisters, and my father's two sisters, — it occurred to me that my father, though 71, belonged to the youngest four of the eight who recently composed our family.

Charles Dunbar: Thoreau's Uncle

An entirely different element from the quiet, conservative, serene element of the Thoreau na-

ture, was that of the loud-voiced, eccentric Dunbars, mingling with the genteel, acquisitive Jones strain, which combined in the union of Mary Jones with Asa Dunbar in the Revolutionary era, at Salem, Weston, and Keene; and found its grotesque culmination in Charles Dunbar, the only brother of Thoreau's mother, Cynthia Dunbar. Everybody has remarked on the paradoxical mind and utterances of Thoreau; but the paradox existed in his heredity, before it displayed itself in his thinking.

Charles Dunbar, the first surviving child of Rev. Asa Dunbar's marriage to Colonel Jones's only daughter in 1772, was born at Weston in 1780, but spent his boyhood in Keene, New Hampshire, in Maine, and in Concord, after his mother remarried Captain Jonas Minot there at the end of the eighteenth century. His nephew said of him: —

March 28, 1856. Uncle Charles buried at Haverhill. He was born in February, 1780, the winter of the Great Snow, and he died in the winter of another great snow, — a life bounded by great snows. He grew up to be a remarkably eccentric man, of large frame, athletic, and celebrated for his feats of strength. His lungs were proportionably strong. A man heard him named once, and asked if it was the same Charles Dunbar whom he remembered when he was a little boy, walking on the

coast of Maine. A man came down to the shore and hailed a vessel that was sailing by. He should never forget that man's name.

I remember Charles Dunbar in his old age, seventy-five, at his sister's table in Concord, an amusing guest, whom his nephew plied with questions. According to Thoreau in "Walden" (then a new book), he went to sleep shaving himself, and was obliged to sprout potatoes in a cellar Sunday, in order to keep awake and keep the Sabbath. It was the era of Potter, the ventriloquist and magician, who settled at Andover, New Hampshire, and seems to have been an illegitimate scion of the family of Sir Charles Frankland, a descendant of Oliver Cromwell. Charles Dunbar emulated Potter, and was known by his juggler's tricks. Thoreau says of him: —

Ever since I knew him he could swallow his nose. One of his tricks was to swallow the knives and forks and some of the plates at a tavern table, and offer to give them up if the landlord would charge nothing for his meal. He could do anything with cards, yet did not gamble. Uncle Charles should have been in Concord in 1843, when Daniel Webster was there. What a whetter-up of his memory that event would have been! [Imitates his uncle]: "And Seth Hunt and Bob Smith, — he was a student of my father's and where's Put now? Webster's a smart fellow, — bears his age well.

How old should you think he was? Does he look as if he were two years younger than I?"

Such was the fact — and somewhere the juggling grandson of Colonel Jones, of Weston, and the statesman son of Captain Webster, of Salisbury, had associated in youth. Thoreau wrote in 1853: —

Jan. 1. After talking with Uncle Charles the other night about the worthies of the country, Webster and the rest, as usual, — considering who were genuine and who not, — I showed him up to bed; and when I had got into bed myself, I heard his chamber door open after eleven o'clock; and he called out, in an earnest, stentorian voice, loud enough to wake the whole house, — "Henry! was John Quincy Adams a genius?" "No, I think not," was my reply. "Well, I did n't think he was," answered he.

Polyphemus Goodwin and George Melvin

Thoreau's collection of river driftwood for fuel and for bookcases to hold his Oriental volumes from Cholmondeley is well-known. But the hint of it seems to have been taken from the similar industry of John Goodwin, of dubious reputation among men, the one-eyed hunter and fisher, whom Channing called "Polyphemus," and George Melvin "Pinkeye"; of whom in October, 1853, Thoreau had this to say: —

Yesterday, toward night, I gave Sophia and Mother a sail as far as the Battle-Ground. One-eyed John Goodwin, the fisherman, was loading into a handcart and conveying home the piles of driftwood which of late he had collected with his boat. It was a beautiful evening, and a clear amber sunset lit up all the eastern shores; and that man's employment, so simple and direct (though he is regarded by most as a vicious character), whose whole motive was so easy to fathom, — thus to obtain his winter's wood, — charmed me unspeakably. So much do we love actions that are simple. They are all poetic. We too would fain be so employed. So unlike are the pursuits of most men, so artificial or complicated.

Consider how the broker collects *his* winter's wood, — what sport he makes of it, — what is his boat and handcart! Postponing instant life, he makes haste to Boston in the cars, and there deals in stocks (not quite relishing his employment), and so earns the money with which he buys his fuel. And when by chance I meet him about this indirect and complicated business, I am not struck with the beauty of his employment. It does not harmonize with the sunset. How much more the former consults his genius, — some genius, at any rate! Now I should love to get my fuel so; I have got some so: but though I may be glad to have it, I do not love to get it in any other way less simple and direct. No *trade* is simple, but artificial and complex. It postpones life and substitutes death. I will never believe that it is the descendants of tradesmen who keep the state alive, — but of simple yeomen or laborers. This

simplicity it is, and the vigor it imparts, that enables the simple vagabond, though he does get drunk and is sent to the House of Correction, so often, to hold up his head among men.

Goodwin is a most constant fisherman. When I can remember to have seen him fishing almost daily for some time, if it rains I am surprised, on looking out, to see him slowly wending his way to the river in his oil-cloth coat, with his basket and pole. I saw him the other day fishing in the middle of the stream, the day after I had seen him fishing on the shore; while by a kind of magic I sailed by him, and he said he was catching minnow for bait in the winter. When I was twenty rods off he held up a pickerel that weighed two and one-half pounds, which he had forgot to show me before; and the next morning, as he afterwards told me, he caught one that weighed three pounds. If it is ever necessary to appoint a committee on fish-ponds and pickerel, let him be one of them. Surely he is tenacious of life, — hard to scale.

Nov. 1, 1858. As I stood on Poplar Hill, I saw a man far off, by the edge of the river, splitting billets off a stump. Suspecting who it was, I took out my glass, and beheld Goodwin, the one-eyed Ajax, in his short blue frock, getting his winter's wood; for this is one of the phenomena of the season. As surely as the ants which he disturbs go into winter quarters in the stumps, when the weather becomes cool, so does G. revisit the stumpy shores with his axe. As usual, his powder flask peeped out from a pocket on his breast, his gun was slanted over a stump near by, and his boat lay a little

further along. He had been at work laying wall still further off, and now, near the end of the day, betook himself to those pursuits which he loved better still. It would be no amusement to me to see a gentleman buy his winter wood. It is to see Goodwin get his. I helped him tip over a stump or two. He said the owner of the land had given him leave to grub up those stumps; but it seemed to me a condescension for him to ask any man's leave. The stumps to those who can use them, I say, — to those who will split them. Near by were large hollows in the ground, now grassed over, where he had got out white oak stumps in previous years. But, strange to say, the town does not like to have him get his fuel in this way. They would rather the stumps would rot in the ground, or be floated down stream to the sea. They would have him stick to laying wall, and buy corded wood as they do.

I guessed at Goodwin's age. He is hale and stout, and looks younger than he is, and I took care to set him high enough. I guessed he was fifty-five, and he said that if he lived two or three months longer he would be fifty-six. He then guessed at my age; thought I was forty. [Really forty-one.] He thought Emerson was a very young-looking man for his age [fifty-five]. "But he has not been out o' nights as much as you have." [*Nov.* 8.] Goodwin, laying wall at Miss Ripley's, observed to me going by, "Well, it seems —— [a rascal] thought he had lived long enough." He had lately committed suicide in Sudbury. In revenge for being sent to the House of Correction, he had set several fires.

Goodwin cannot be a very bad man, he is so cheery.

It is evident that Thoreau was truly friendly with these hunters; they sympathized more than they disagreed. Mrs. Thoreau once described her son as "very tolerant," and that perhaps was as near a description as a single adjective could bring you. It requires a long list of them to portray him fully.

Friendship Analyzed

Of all the thousand topics about which he thought and wrote, in the rich wilderness of his twenty volumes as they stand on the shelves of his principal publisher, none returned to his thought and his anxieties so often as Friendship. A few of the many forms in which he sketched that fascinating torment, that unsatisfied ideal, may here be given: —

Nov. 3, 1858. How long we *will* follow an illusion! On meeting that one whom I call my friend, I find I had imagined something that was not there. I am sure to depart sadder than I came. Nothing makes me so dejected as to have met my friends; for they make me doubt if it is possible to have any friends. I feel what a fool I am. I cannot conceive of persons more strange to me than they actually are: not thinking, not believing, not doing as I do,—interrupted by me. My only distinction must be, that I am the greatest bore they ever had. Not in a single thought we agreed,

regularly balking one another. But when I get far away, my thoughts return to them. That is the way I *can* visit them. Thus I am taught that my friend is not an actual person. When I have withdrawn and am alone, I forget the actual person and remember only my ideal. Then I have a friend again.

I am not so ready to perceive the same illusion that is in Nature. I certainly come nearer, to say the least, to an actual and joyful intercourse with her. Every day I have more or less communion with her, — *as I think*. At least I do not feel as if I must withdraw out of Nature. I feel like a welcome guest. Yet, strictly speaking, the same must be true of Nature and of Man, our ideal is the only real. It is not the finite and temporal that satisfies or concerns us in either case.

I associate the idea of Friendship, methinks, with the person the most foreign to me. We are attracted toward a particular person; but no one has discovered the laws of this attraction. When I come nearest to that other *actually*, I am wont to be surprised at my selection. It may be enough that we have met *some time*, and now can never forget it. Some time or other we paid each other this wonderful compliment, — looked largely, humanly, divinely on one another; and now are fated to be acquaintances forever. In the case of Nature I am not so conscious of this unsatisfied yearning.

This may be called the profoundest analysis of friendship that has yet been published; yet

the simplest expression of the sentiment is as suggestive. He returned to the subject the next February, after reading Miss Shepard's "Counterparts," which Emerson thought might have been written by his fanciful friend, Charles Newcomb, in Paris: —

Its illustration of Love and Friendship is very interesting, as showing how much we can know of each other through sympathy merely, without any of the ordinary information. You know about a person who interests you deeply more than you can be told. A look, a gesture, an act, which to everybody else is insignificant, tells you more about *that one* than words can. If he wished to conceal something from you, it would be apparent. It is as if a bird told you. Your friend designs that it shall be a secret to you. Vain wish! You will know it, — and also his design. He says consciously nothing about it; yet as he is necessarily affected by it, its effect is visible to you. From this effect you infer the cause. You unconsciously make the right supposition; no other will account for precisely this behavior. Your knowledge exceeds the woodcraft of the cunningest hunter. It is as if you had a sort of trap, knowing the haunts of your game, what lures attract it, and its track. You have foreseen how it will behave when it is caught; and now you only behold what you anticipated.

Sometimes from the altered manner of our friend, which no cloak can possibly conceal, we know that something has happened, and what it was — all the

essential particulars, though it would be a long story to tell. You are the more sure, because in the case of Love, effects follow their causes more inevitably, — this being a controlling power. A friend tells all with a look, a tone, a gesture, a presence, a friendliness. He is present when absent.

Subtilty is here more subtly expressed than in the novel itself, because the words of Thoreau are more expressive than hers, and his imagination more vivid. In November, eight years earlier, he had like thoughts (1851): —

I love my friends very much, but I find it is no use to go and see them. I hate them commonly when I am near them. They belie themselves and deny me continually, I have certain friends whom I visit occasionally, but I commonly part from them early, with a certain bitter-sweet sentiment. That which we love is so mixed and entangled with what we hate in one another, that we are more grieved and disappointed — aye, and estranged from one another — by meeting than by absence. Some men may be my acquaintances merely; but one whom I have been accustomed to regard, to idealize, to have dreams about, as a friend, can never degenerate into an acquaintance. I must know him on that higher ground, or not know him at all. Our friend must be broad. His must be an atmosphere coextensive with the universe, in which we can expand and breathe. For the most part we are smothered and stifled by one another. I go to see my

friend and try his atmosphere. If our atmospheres do not mingle, — if we repel each other strongly, — it is of no use to stay.

Perhaps the most striking passages, after all, — certainly the most quoted, — are those written at some uncertain date before the publication of the "Week" in 1849; some of which date back even before the actual Merrimac voyage in 1839. Alcott's diary shows that the chapter on Friendship in that volume was completed in 1847, and in that appeared the verses: —

> "There's nothing in the world I know
> That can escape from Love;
> For every depth it goes below,
> And every height above.
>
> "Implacable is Love, —
> Foes may be bought or teased
> From their hostile intent;
> But he goes unappeased
> Who is on kindness bent."

Village Culture

Aug. 29, 1852. We boast that we belong to the Nineteenth Century, and are making the most rapid strides of any nation. But consider how little this village does for its own culture. We have a comparatively decent system of common schools, — schools for infants only, as it were; but, excepting the half-starved

Lyceum in the winter, no schools for ourselves. It is time that we had uncommon schools, — that we did not leave off our education when we begin to be men. It is time that villages were universities, and their elder inhabitants the Fellows, with leisure — if they are indeed so well off — to pursue liberal studies as long as they live. Comparatively few of our townsmen evince any interest in their own culture, however much they may boast of the school-tax they pay. In this country, the Village should take the place of the Noble, who has gone by the board. It should be the patron of the fine arts. It is rich enough; it only wants the refinement. It can spend money enough on such things as farmers value; but it is thought utopian to propose spending money for things which more intelligent men know to be of far more worth.

If we live in the Nineteenth Century, why should we not enjoy the advantages which the century has to offer? Why should our life be in any respect provincial? As the nobleman of cultivated taste surrounds himself with whatever conduces to his culture, — books, paintings, statuary, etc., — so let the village do. This town of Concord, — how much has it ever spent directly on its own culture? To act collectively is according to the spirit of our institutions; and I am confident that, as our circumstances are more flourishing, our means are greater. New England can hire all the wise men in the world to come and teach her, and board them round the while, — and not be provincial at all. That is the uncommon school we want. The $125 which is subscribed in this town every winter

for a Lyceum is better spent than any equal sum. Instead of noblemen, let us have noble towns or villages of men. This town has just spent $16,000 for a Town House. Suppose it had been proposed to spend an equal sum for something which will tend far more to refine and cultivate its inhabitants, — a Library, for instance. We have sadly neglected our education.

It was five years after this that Concord found public employment for Alcott, one of the most refined and original men, who, with his daughters, has made the name of Concord known to more millions, the world over, than all other Concord authors. The next year (August 9, 1853), after selling his house to Hawthorne, with thirty acres of land, for one thousand five hundred dollars, in 1852, he called on Thoreau, who made this note of their conversation: —

Alcott spent the day with me yesterday. He spent the day before with Emerson. He observed that he there got his wine, and now had come after his venison. Such was the compliment he paid me. The question of a livelihood is troubling him. He knew of nothing he could do for which men would pay him. He could not compete with the Irish in cradling grain. His early education had not fitted him for a clerkship. He had offered his services to the Abolition Society, to go about the country as their agent and speak for freedom; but they declined him. This is very much to

their discredit; they should have been forward to secure him. Such a connection with him would confer unexpected dignity on their enterprise. But they cannot tolerate a man who stands by a head above them. They require a man who will train well *under* them. Consequently they have not in their employ any but small men.

Thoreau as a Workingman (1845–47)

While I lived in the woods I did jobs about town, — fence-building, painting, gardening, carpentering, etc. I built six fences, — the common slat-fence for $1.50 a rod, or else I worked for $1 a day. I contracted to build a wood-shed of no mean size for exactly six dollars; and I cleared about half of that by a close calculation and swift working. The tenant wanted me to throw in a gutter and latch; but I carried off the board that was left over, and gave him no latch but a button. It stands yet (1857) behind the Kettle house. Going home to Walden with what nails were left in a flour-bucket on my arm in a rain, I was about getting into a hay-rigging, when my umbrella frightened the horse, and he kicked at me over the fills [shafts], smashed the bucket on my arm, and stretched me on my back. But while I lay on my back (his leg being caught over the shaft), I got up to see him sprawling on the other side. This accident — the sudden bending of my body backward — sprained my stomach so that I did not get quite strong there for several years; but had to give up some fence-building and other work, undertaken from time to time.

One day a man came from the east edge of the town and said that he wanted me to brick up a fireplace for him. I told him I was not a mason; but he knew that I had built my own house entirely, and would not take no for an answer. So I went. It was three miles off, and I walked back and forth each day, arriving early and working as late as if I were living there. The man was gone away most of the time; but had left some sand dug up in his cowyard for me to make mortar with. I bricked up a fireplace, papered a chamber, etc., but my principal work was whitewashing ceilings. I took my meals there, sitting down with my employer (when he got home) and his hired men. I worked hard there three days, charging only a dollar a day.

July, 1852. There is a coarse, boisterous, money-making fellow, who is going to build a bank-wall under the hill along the edge of his meadow, and he wishes me to spend three weeks digging there with him. Now if I do this, the community will commend me as an industrious and hard-working man; but as I choose to devote myself to labors that yield more real profit, though but little money, they regard me as a loafer. I prefer to finish my education at a different school.

Sept. 16, 1859. I am invited to take some party of ladies or gentlemen on an excursion, — to walk or sail, or the like; but by all kinds of evasions I omit it, — and am thought to be rude and unaccommodating therefor. They do not consider that the wood-path and the boat are my studio, where I maintain a sacred solitude, and do not admit promiscuous company. I will see them occasionally, however, in an evening or

at the table. They do not think of taking a child away from its school, to go a-huckleberrying with them. Why should not I, then, have my school and school-hours to be respected? Ask me for a certain number of dollars if you will, but do not ask me for my afternoons.

Thoreau made no objection to spending four hours of his morning, in the early December following, in taking a hunted fugitive to a place of safety. Here is his note of the drive with young Meriam, already described: —

X. [Meriam] was betrayed by his eyes, which had a glaring film over them, and no serene depth into which you could look. Said, "I know I am insane," — and I knew it too. Inquired particularly the way to Emerson's, and the distance; and when I told him, said he knew it as well as if he saw it, — wished to turn and proceed to his house. Told me one or two things which he wished me not to tell Sanborn. At length, when I made a certain remark, he said, "I don't know but *you* are Emerson; are you? You look somewhat like him." He said as much two or three times, and added once, "But then Emerson would n't lie." Finally he put his questions to me, of Fate, etc., as if I *were* Emerson. Getting to the woods, I remarked upon them, and he mentioned my name, but never to the end suspected who his companion was. Then he "proceeded to business, since the time was short," — and put to me the questions he was going to put to Emerson. His

insanity exhibited itself chiefly by his incessant, excited talk, scarcely allowing me to interrupt him; but once or twice apologizing for his behavior. He also called his manner "nervous excitement." What he said was for the most part connected and sensible enough. He said, among other things, that if he did not clean his teeth when he got up, it made him sick all the rest of the day; but he had found by late experience that when he had not cleaned his teeth for several days, they cleaned themselves. I told him that such was the general rule, — when from any cause we were prevented from doing what we had commonly thought indispensable for us to do, things *cleaned* or took care of themselves.

Melvin, a Foil to Meriam

Three years before, almost to a day, Thoreau had met George Melvin again, and thus lauds him: —

Saw little in this walk. Saw Melvin's lank, bluish-white, black-spotted hound, and Melvin with his gun near, going home at eve. He follows hunting, — praise be to him! as regularly in our tame fields, as the farmers follow farming. Persistent Genius! How I respect him, and thank him for him! I trust the Lord will provide us with another Melvin when he is gone. How good in him to follow his own bent, and not continue at the Sunday School all his days! What a wealth he thus becomes in the neighborhood! I thank my stars for Melvin. I think of him with gratitude when I am going to sleep, grateful that he exists, — that

Melvin who is such a trial to his mother, — he is agreeable to me, as a tinge of russet on the hillside. He is my contemporary and neighbor. He is one tribe, I am another, — and we are not at war. . . . How I love the simple, reserved countrymen, my neighbors, who mind their own business and let me alone; who never waylaid nor shot at me (to my knowledge) when I crossed their fields, though each one has a gun in the house. For nearly twoscore years I have known, at a distance, these long-suffering men, — whom I never spoke to, who never spoke to me, — and now I feel a certain tenderness for them, as if this long probation were but the prelude to an eternal friendship. I am not only grateful because Veias, and Homer, and Christ, and Shakespeare have lived; but I am grateful for Minott and Rice, and Melvin and Goodwin, — and Puffer even. I see Melvin all alone, filling his sphere, in russet suit, which no other could fill or suggest. He takes up as much room in nature as the most famous.[1]

[1] There was a kind of humor in these remarks; but it was a *good* humor. He truly felt a kindly interest in such neighbors, and so did they in him. Few writers have better portrayed them. They did not misunderstand him so strangely as did Lowell the poet, and Snider the Hegelian, and Bowen the college professor, and even Whitman the Kosmos.

CHAPTER XIV

SLAVERY AND JOHN BROWN

It would be hard to say how early Henry Thoreau became concerned on the subject of slavery in America. His friend John Brown, at the age of twelve, when driving herds of cattle in southern Ohio and western Virginia, for the food of the United States Army in the War of 1812 against England, swore eternal war against slavery; and Thoreau may have hated it as a boy, because his family and their visitors held it in aversion. His Jones ancestors in Weston had owned a few slaves, but the Revolution had obliterated slaveholding in Massachusetts; the slave-trade was held in abhorrence, and was legally piracy after 1808, when John Thoreau came of age; and in his merchandising he had no temptations to trade with slaveholders, as the kinsmen of his mother's friend, Mrs. Brooks, the daughter of a Concord Merrick, were doing in South Carolina when Henry was born. Soon after Garrison opened his agitation in Boston, and began to edit the "Liberator," in 1831, a Woman's Anti-Slavery society was organized in Concord, of which Mrs.

Colonel Ward, widow of a Revolutionary Boston officer, became an active member, and also, after 1832, an intimate of both branches of the Thoreau family. Her daughter, Miss Prudence Ward, aunt of the "gentle boy," Ellen Sewall, was also a member, and a zealous botanist, artist, and letter-writer, corresponding with the Thoreau sisters, and instructing them in botany. When Mrs. Ward died in 1844, one of the aunts of Henry Thoreau seems to have written this notice of her philanthropies:—

Mrs. Ward has for many years been a resident of Concord, and has greatly endeared herself to many friends by the urbanity of her manners, the kindness of her heart, and that candor and charity which, while it passed over the defects of her associates as things not to be observed, at the same time sought with eagerness the bright sides to their characters. This made us always feel safe and happy in her society.[1]

[1] A most amiable trait, which was not always found among her friends the Thoreaus and Miss Mary Emerson (then living at Concord, and perhaps also a member of this Anti-Slavery Society). Its president was Mrs. Brooks, the mother of George Brooks (afterwards Congressman and judge), who had persuaded Emerson to write his letter to President Van Buren, and to give his First of August Address on West India Emancipation, in 1844. It continued in existence till Lincoln's final Emancipation, and at Mrs. Brooks's table I dined with Phillips, Garrison, and most of the distinguished fugitive slaves who reached Concord. The rescued Shadrach, in 1851, was aided by her, and left Concord by night for Canada, wearing one of her husband's discarded hats, and possibly

The eulogy of Mrs. Ward went on: —

She had a heart full of compassion for the suffering and the tried, which was the cause of her deep interest in the deeply injured, weary, heart-broken slave. For many years she has been a member of our Society, always aiding us by her purse, her sympathies and her labors. She uniformly, and consistently stood by the principles of the old pioneer Society; and we feel that indeed a great void is made in our much thinned ranks.

This implies that the Concord society was purely Garrisonian, and had resisted the arguments of voting abolitionists like Whittier, Birney, and Elizur Wright. This may have been one reason why Thoreau, as he came to the voting age, in 1838, abstained from voting; but it was more likely to have been the result of his own strict logic. So long as Massachusetts, even passively, sustained negro slavery, Thoreau would neither vote nor pay taxes. He had in college probably been an anti-Jackson Whig, like John Quincy Adams, Daniel Webster, and Caleb Cushing, who all opposed slavery in Congress, — as, indeed, the whole party in State Convention did in 1837. He early explained his own ground of opposition to the pro-slavery govern-

an overcoat (for it was winter), and was driven in a carriage by her neighbor, Bigelow, the blacksmith.

ment in his "Civil Disobedience" of 1847, which Miss Peabody first printed in her "Æsthetic Papers," along with papers by Emerson, Hawthorne, and S. G. Ward, in 1848. Thoreau is said to have rung the bell for Emerson's Emancipation Address of 1844; and he was active in making arrangements for the memorial service for John Brown, on the afternoon of his execution, December 2, 1859. It was soon after this that he aided the escape of Meriam to Canada, as he had that of several fugitive slaves in former years.

In his place as Curator of the Concord Lyceum in 1842 and later, he promoted free discussion of the slave question in public, and helped organize the band of young members of the Lyceum that voted down the conservative seniors of the village who strove to keep Wendell Phillips from addressing the fortnightly Lyceum on Slavery. The story is an interesting one, and is not too well known. It exists in letters chiefly of the Thoreau families, and two or three of these are by Helen and Maria Thoreau, and Miss Prudence Ward.

The Thoreau Family and the Concord Lyceum

Soon after his return from the voyage on the Merrimac in 1839, Henry was chosen Secretary of the Village Lyceum, and held that or a similar

place for five or six years, lecturing himself every year. When in 1842 it was announced at the debating session, in alternate weeks, that Wendell Phillips would lecture the next week, an elderly member, John Keyes, moved as a resolve, "That as this Lyceum is established for social and mutual improvement, the introduction of the vexed and disorganizing question of Abolitionism or Slavery should be kept out of it." The motion failed, and Phillips lectured as announced.

The same winter Mr. Alcott returned from England with his English friends Charles Lane and Henry Wright, who spent the winter and spring with the Alcotts, in the Hosmer cottage, before going in May to open their rural Elysium at Harvard. Writing to her brother, George Ward, in New York (December 8, 1842), Miss Ward said: —

We find the Englishmen very agreeable. We took tea with them at Mrs. Brooks's, and they have passed one evening here at Mrs. Thoreau's (in the Parkman house). They and Mr. Alcott held a talk at the Marlboro Chapel in Boston, Sunday evening. Doubtless you, George, would consider them "clean daft"; for they are as like Mr. Alcott in their views as strangers from a foreign land well can be. I should like to have them in this vicinity. It makes a pleasant variety (to say no more) to have these different thinkers near us;

and Mr. Lane, we are all agreed in liking to hear talk. Our Lyceum has opened, and last evening we had "The Philosophy of Slavery."

This may have been the title of Phillips's lecture. At any rate, he spoke that winter, in his usual quiet manner, but uttering extreme opinions; favoring disunion as the best antidote for slavery, and denouncing the Constitution of 1787 as the protector of that national curse. Being invited to lecture the next winter (January, 17, 1844), the same old citizen, Squire Keyes, moved that he be asked to choose some other topic than Slavery; alleging that his sentiments of last winter had been "vile, pernicious, and abominable." The Lyceum, well filled with young people, voted to hear him on his own subject. He came, and spoke for an hour and a half, "a magnificent burst of eloquence from beginning to end," as one of his hearers (possibly Miss Helen Thoreau) wrote in the "Liberator." H. M. went on: —

He charged the sin of slavery upon the religion of the country, with its 20,000 pulpits. The Church had charged Mr. Garrison with being an infidel to its teachings, — and there was some truth in it. "I love my Master too well to be anything but infidel to the religion of my country." Of the State he said, "The

curse of every honest man should be upon its Constitution. Could I say to Jefferson, Hancock, and Adams, after the experience of the past fifty years, 'Look at the fruits of your work' — they would bid me crush the parchment under my feet."

This was too much for the civil-suited conservatism of Concord, and an evening was appointed to discuss and censure the orator.

The mover of the vote of censure [the same John Keyes, says H. M.] talked an hour quoting St. Paul about "leading captive silly women, etc."

Another senior, Samuel Hoar (father of the late Senator), occupied an hour more with like severity, saying, "It requires not a little arrogance in a stripling to assert such monstrous doctrines." He complimented Phillips on his oratory, but solemnly warned the young persons present against such exciting utterances. As he went on, he kept asking, "What would our young Cicero say to this? How would he explain this?" etc.

Phillips, who had been warned by the Thoreaus, Colonel Whiting, or some other abolitionist, of the attack to be made on him, was quietly present in the back part of the old vestry of the First Parish Meeting-House of Whiting, Emerson, and Dr. Ripley, and now stepped forward. "Would the gentleman like an answer here? and now?" That

was not the gentleman's wish at all, — but there was no help against it. Phillips said: —

I agree with the last speaker that this is a serious subject; otherwise I should not have devoted my whole life to it. Stripling as I am, I but echo the voice of the ages, — of our venerable fathers, — of statesmen, poets, philosophers. . . . The gentleman has painted the dangers to life, liberty, and happiness that might be the consequence of doing right; the dangers he dreads are now legalized at the South. I would not so blaspheme God as to doubt that I shall be safe in obeying Him. Treading the dust of statute law beneath my feet, I enter the Holy of Holies, and there I find written, "Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee; he shall dwell with you, even among you." I throw myself on the bosom of Infinite Wisdom.

Our pulpits are silent. Who ever heard our subject presented, before this movement began, of the silly women and the striplings? The first speaker [Keyes] accused me of ambitious motives. Had I been ambitious, I should have chosen an easier path to fame. Yet I would say to you, my young friends, who have just been cautioned against excitement, and advised to fold your hands in selfish ease, — "Throw yourself upon the altar of some noble cause! enthusiasm is the life of the soul." To rise in the morning only to eat and drink and gather gold, is a life not worth living.

This expressed the aspirations of Henry Thoreau, his sisters, and his younger friends. They

applauded the orator and voted to hear him again on the same theme. He came in March, 1845, a dozen years before John Brown was first seen and heard in Concord, and Thoreau reported both for the public press. But Miss Ward, who had gone to visit a nephew at Spencer in 1845, must be informed of the great event; and so Helen Thoreau wrote to tell her :[1]

I wish to remind you of the Anti-Slavery Society at the Tabernacle in New York, on the 6th of May. You must not fail to attend; and I hope to meet you at the New England Convention. Can you not visit here about that time?

Aunt Maria has kept you informed of our controversy with the Lyceum. A hard battle, — but victory at last; next winter we shall have undoubtedly a free Lyceum. Mr. Emerson says that words cannot express his admiration for the lecture of Mr. Phillips. Did you receive the paper ("Liberator") containing Henry's article about it?

I am glad that you liked the Hutchinsons. One of our evening meetings last May was closed with their Emancipation Song, — the whole audience rising and joining in the last stanza. Ten of the Hutchinson family sung. George Thatcher happened to be present, and was highly delighted. We are making great efforts to get them here in Concord. I long to see you in Con-

[1] This is one of the few letters of Helen Thoreau's that have been preserved. She died in June, 1849, not quite thirty-seven years old. More of Sophia's exist.

MARIA THOREAU

cord again. We always have something stirring here. Aunt Maria will of course tell you all the news.

Maria Thoreau, the last survivor of the American branch of the family that retained the name, died at the house of her kinsman George Thatcher, just mentioned, in 1881. She and her two chief correspondents, Miss Ward and Miss Laura Harris, kept up a lively interchange of letters for some forty years, in which Henry Thoreau was often mentioned. He shared some of their opinions, but not all; and this mention of the Ward family, with branches in New York and in Spencer, near Worcester, will explain allusions to them in Thoreau's letters.

At this date (1845–46) the early Journals had mostly been destroyed, and the Fugitive-Slave Act of 1850 had not been passed, nor had Daniel Webster given his unlucky March speech in that year, which so injured his reputation as a far-seeing statesman. Three weeks before he made that speech (February 15, 1850) he had written to Dr. Furness at Philadelphia:—

From my earliest youth I have regarded slavery as a great moral and political evil. I think it unjust, founded only in superior power, a standing and permanent conquest of the stronger over the weaker. All pretences of defending it on the ground of difference

of races I have ever condemned. If the black race is weaker, that is a reason against, not for, its subjection and oppression. Slavery is a continual and permanent violation of human rights.

The opinions, and even the expression of them by John Brown and by Thoreau did not much differ from these of Webster. But he went on to say:—

In my judgment, confusion, conflict, embittered controversy, violence, bloodshed, and civil war would only rivet the chains of slavery the more strongly.

This was a short-sighted view; it was not that of John Quincy Adams, nor was it that of Thoreau or of John Brown; or of those few men who secretly supported Brown and gave him the money and the arms to make his attack on this "permanent violation of human rights," this "subjection and oppression of a weaker race by a stronger," which Webster abhorred.

Webster's policy was one of despair and compromise; that of Thoreau, of Brown, and his friends, was a policy of hope and faith; and they understood, as few Americans seemed then to understand, the force of a noble example, which, in Brown's case, converted more men and women to his view of slavery than all the orators and moralists and novelists had been able to convert

in the thirty years since Andrew Jackson came to the Presidency. That miracle happened which Emerson had chronicled, in the liberation of Europe from the fetters of the Holy Alliance, —

"The astonished Muse finds thousands at her side."

And the "Touchstone" of Allingham, first made famous by Emerson in one of his eulogies on Brown, pointed symbolically to the same truth of human nature more sharply: —

"A man there came, — whence none could tell, —
Bearing a Touchstone in his hand:
He tested all things in the land
By its unerring spell.
A thousand transformations rose
From fair to foul, from foul to fair:
The royal crown he did not spare,
Nor scorn the beggar's clothes.

"Of heirloom jewels, prized so much,
Were many changed to chips and clods;
Nay — even statues of the gods
Crumbled beneath its touch.
Then angrily the people cried,
'The loss outweighs the profit far, —
Our goods suffice us as they are;
We will not have them tried.'

"But though they slew him with the sword,
And in the fire the touchstone burned,
Its doing could not be o'erturned,
Its undoings restored.

And when, to stop all future harm,
They strewed its ashes on the breeze,
They little guessed each grain of these
Conveyed the perfect charm."

In his essay on "Civil Disobedience" (1846), Thoreau had said, philosophically foreshadowing Brown, and setting Webster aside by his own principles: —

Statesmen are apt to forget that the world is not governed by policy and expediency. They speak of moving society, — but have no resting-place without it. Webster never goes behind government, and so cannot speak with authority about it. Truth is always in harmony with herself; and is not concerned chiefly to reveal the justice that may consist with wrong-doing. For eighteen hundred years the New Testament has been written: yet where is the legislator who has wisdom and practical talent enough to avail himself of the light it sheds on the science of legislation?

Such a legislator, proclaiming his law from the dungeon and the scaffold, Thoreau at last saw appear in Brown, who said to the court which sentenced him: —

I see a book kissed here which I suppose to be the Bible, or at least the New Testament. That teaches me that "whatsoever I would that men should do unto me, I should do even so unto them." It teaches me further to "remember them in bonds, as bound with

them." I endeavored to act up to that instruction. I say that I am yet too young to understand that God is any respecter of persons. I believe that to have interfered, as I have done, in behalf of His despised poor, was not wrong, but right.

To his questioners, the rulers of the slave-cursed State of Virginia, he had, weeks before, repeated the warning which Jefferson had given them from Paris, at the close of the eighteenth century; that they must emancipate their slaves, and not wait for Abraham Lincoln to do it for them, by force: —

You had better — all you people at the South — prepare yourselves for a settlement of this negro question, — that must come up for settlement sooner than you are prepared for it. The sooner you are prepared for it the better. You may dispose of me very easily; I am nearly disposed of now. But this question is still to be settled; the end of that is not yet.

It came even quicker than Brown himself, or Lincoln, or Thoreau, had imagined; though Thoreau did not live to see it. In less than four years after Brown's death, emancipation was decreed by the head of the nation, and in less than ten years the Union, for which Brown fought, was reconstituted on the basis of emancipation, as Adams had foretold.

Although Thoreau had rendered many services to the cause of human freedom for many years, and had looked after more than one fugitive slave who made his way to Concord, either for escape to Canada, or for enlightening his countrymen, of both races, on the actual character of American slavery, yet his chief service was in the instant and effective championship given to the slandered character of Brown, when his foray in Virginia met with the immediate and inevitable defeat which Brown's own providential mismanagement occasioned. Along with Emerson and Phillips, Thoreau saw at once what this startling demonstration signified. They had known nothing of Brown's secret and long-cherished plans for making slave property unsafe; but they knew what he had done in Kansas and Missouri, and what the capacity and mood of the man were; and they felt sure, as I did, that the nation would respond, in no short time, to such heroic and unselfish mood. It did so respond before his death, and still more signally during the early Civil War. The John Brown Song, a genuine creation of the camp in Boston Harbor, was sung in Boston, where I heard it, in the late summer of 1861, and by the marching soldiers of a regiment commanded by the son of Daniel Web-

ster; and before Brown had been two years in his grave among the mountains, Mrs. Howe's "Battle Hymn of the Republic" had translated his meaning into those memorable verses that have gone in music round the world. Thoreau had said at Framingham in 1854: —

The law will never make men free; it is men who have got to make the law free. They are the lovers of law and order who observe the law when the government breaks it.

Five years later, having come to the acquaintance of John Brown, Henry said to a far wider audience than he had ever addressed before: —

No man has appeared in America as yet who loved his fellow-man so well and treated him so tenderly. He lived for him. He took up his life and laid it down for him. He has liberated many thousands of slaves, North and South.

Of the execution he added: —

I foresee the time when the painter will paint that scene, no longer going to Rome for a subject; the poet will sing it; the historian record it; and, with the Landing of the Pilgrims and the Declaration of Independence, it will be the ornament of some future National Gallery, when at least the present form of slavery shall be no more here. We shall then be at liberty to weep for Captain Brown. Then, and not till then, we will take our revenge.

How tenderly Thoreau himself could treat his unhappy fellow men was seen by Moncure Conway (that generous Virginian who emancipated his own slaves) in the second interview he ever had with the Concord hermit. It was in 1853, when Conway was opening his acquaintance with Concord and its men of genius. He had made an appointment to walk in the woods with Thoreau, but something had happened in the interval: —

> I found the Thoreaus [at their new house near the railroad station] agitated by the arrival of a fugitive from Virginia, who had come to their door at daybreak. Thoreau took me to a room where his excellent sister, Sophia, was ministering to the fugitive, who recognized me as one he had seen in Virginia. He was alarmed, but his fears passed into delight when, after talking with him about our County, I certified his genuineness. I observed the tender and lowly devotion of Thoreau to the African. He now and then drew near to the trembling man, and with a cheerful voice bade him feel at home, and have no fear that any power should again wrong him. That whole day he mounted guard over the fugitive, for it was a slave-hunting time. The next day the fugitive was got off to Canada, and I enjoyed my first walk with Thoreau.

When Conway visited Concord in late July immediately after the Union reverse at Bull Run, the town was sad over the defeat of its first

volunteers, and, as he said, "optimism had fled even from the home of Emerson. Thoreau, sadly out of health, was the only cheerful man in Concordia; he was in a state of exaltation about the moral regeneration of the nation."

Thoreau had lately returned from the Minnesota journey, a little better in health; and three weeks later (August 19) he visited the Ricketsons at New Bedford, driving and walking about the old haunts there for five days. Then Mr. Ricketson returned his visit, for three days, walking with Thoreau to the Battle-Ground and to Walden, and bathing with him in those hallowed waters. Thoreau soon grew weaker, and Walden was too far for a walk; but he drove there with Sophia on a fine September day in the first year of the war, of which she wrote, "While I sat sketching, Henry gathered grapes from a vine dropping its fruit into the green waters which gently laved its roots."

Gradually he bade farewell to all his outdoor activities as the stern winter came on, without attracting him to a milder climate; and he gave up even his active interest in the freedom of the slave, — feeling confident, apparently, that since the demonstration of John Brown, the cause of the oppressed was in sure hands, as most of those

who had aided that martyr came early to believe. Of this, Channing says: —

For Captain John Brown, from the first, he had undivided respect and esteem; nor had that devoted man at his death a sincerer mourner. We took our usual walk after his affecting funeral ceremony in Concord, and the cool twilight cast its reproach over that tragedy, as there fell on the events that followed a twilight of terror, succeeded by a resurrection of peaceful and serene freedom. Thoreau had never faltered, but lived and worked a faithful friend to the American slave.

CHAPTER XV

DEATH AND LITERARY REBIRTH OF THOREAU

To those who really knew Thoreau, his last illness and death revealed the profound strength and sweet earnestness of his character. Well as we had observed the foundation of moral greatness on which it was built, it required the crisis in Virginia which preceded and brought on the Civil War to show all its virtue, which a certain drapery of paradox and levity had veiled with provoking contradictions. With the eye of a seer and the voice of a prophet, he placed himself at the bar beside his heroic friend, and told the startled world the truth of the situation, and the doom of a national and commercial crime, which at last had come up for sentence and execution. He stood also beside Abraham Lincoln in those revelations of divine justice which contrast so forcibly with the political sagacity and expedients in which that statesman's genius was so fertile, and which he was so ready to abandon in moments of divine illumination. Said Lincoln to Moncure Conway in January, 1862, when he was urged to proclaim emancipation, as Fremont had:

The position in which I am placed brings me into some knowledge of opinions in all parts of the country, and of many different kinds of people; and it appears to me that the great masses of this country care little about the negro, and are anxious only for victory.

Adding, however: —

We shall need all the anti-slavery feeling in the country, and more; you can go home and try to bring the people to your views; and you may say anything you like about me, if that will help. Don't spare me!

With a smile. Then he added, very gravely: —

When the hour comes for dealing with slavery, I trust I will be willing to do my duty though it cost my life. And, gentlemen, *lives will be lost.*

This remark prefigured that stern passage in one of his last public addresses, when he said: —

If God wills that this mighty scourge of war continue until all the wealth piled by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk; and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, — as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

Nothing said or written by Thoreau or John Brown is more tragic or portentous than this.

Yet each of the three, on the background of such gloomy imaginations, traced the most tender sentiments and the most humorous pictures of ordinary life. They are three striking and searching examples of moral genius, perhaps the most profound that ever appeared on our American stage; yet each of them was looked upon, by unobservant or indiscriminate contemporaries, as trifling, or merely eccentric, persons.

Toward the close of his remarkable funeral oration on Thoreau, Emerson, who insisted that the ceremony should take place in the village church, — as Hawthorne's had, and as his own and Channing's afterward did, — said with great truth: "The country knows not yet, or in the least part, how great a son it has lost." Time has supplied that knowledge; and the singular disparagement of Thoreau's genius which began with the educated seniors of his own village, and was spread and exaggerated by the alumni of his own college, — Holmes, Lowell, J. F. Clarke, Alger, and others, — had begun to cease before his lamented death. The editor of the "Atlantic Monthly," Mr. Fields, who had succeeded to the able but rather indolent editorship of J. R. Lowell, had a publisher's instinct for what his readers would like; and persuaded Thoreau, in his long illness, to

promise him those later essays which began to come out in the year of his death. They had been written earlier, but were buried in the rich luxuriance of his thirty volumes of the Journals. He now took them up anew, and with patient industry prepared them to refute, after his decease, the ungenerous and undiscriminating verdicts that had been registered against him, and continued for some years longer. This accounts for the uncalled-for sharpness of Ellery Channing's note to me, in the year following our friend's death (November, 1863), in which he said: —

My plan is to prepare a sketch of Mr. Thoreau's life, — perhaps to make a book of 300 pages. I suppose I could complete it, so that it might be printed in 1864. . . . That justice can be done to our deceased brother by me is something I do not think of. But to you and me is entrusted the care of his immediate fame. I feel that my part is not yet done. My sketch must only serve as a note and advertisement that such a man lived, — that he did brave work, which must yet be given to the world. In the midst of all the cold and selfish men who knew this brave and devoted scholar and genius, why should you not be called on to make some sacrifice, — even if it be to publish my sketch? There might be persons who, if they were to surmise that we two had this object in view, would hire some literary jackal to dig up and befoul our brother's corpse. With this, then, let us conclude:

About January 1st, expect my "copy," — with no shadow of patronage or request in it, but your own and mine.

Although I saw no occasion for so much asperity, and my turn was to avoid controversies, yet, as I had a new weekly then at my disposal (the "Boston Commonwealth") with room for literary matter of some extent, I assented to this proposal, and began to print the manuscript of my friend, in whose house I had lived for three years, and who afterwards lived ten years in mine, with much amity and confidence.

This went on for several weeks, and the early chapters began to attract some attention. I remember, in particular that Charles Sumner, then in the midst of his great career in the Senate, at the head of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in the crisis of the Civil War, expressed a real interest in the biography. But in some pique or caprice, characteristic of his literary work, Channing soon withdrew the manuscript, and its printing was not renewed for several years. Then it was taken up by Miss Alcott's publisher, Thomas Niles, of Roberts Brothers, and completed in a volume which was thought by the publisher not to be so thick as the custom of booksellers required; and he requested the author, through me, to give him

two or three more chapters. To do this, Channing resorted to an odd expedient. He had arranged with his friends Emerson and Thoreau, twenty years earlier (in 1852), to prepare a manuscript made up from the conversations and Journals of the three friends, which should present the table-talk of the few past years, and might be printed if, when completed, it seemed best to make it public. This was Channing's request, and at his instance Emerson gave him a copy of portions of his Journals previous to 1852, and Thoreau allowed him to copy passages from such of the Thoreau Journals as were then in existence.[1] From this manuscript, never completed, and to the publication of which Emerson never

[1] I speak in this matter from positive knowledge, having had in my possession the manuscript volume in Emerson's and Channing's handwriting, which contained passages copied by Emerson himself (mostly), but sometimes by Channing, from the original Emerson Journals of 1843–48, and a few others. It also had remarks made in conversation by Emerson, copied in by Channing, and verses and epigrams. I have also the letters, on Channing's side, relating to this proposed book, — "Country Walking," — but not Emerson's replies. Those, if preserved, are probably in the large mass of Emerson's letters, of which comparatively few have been printed, except the correspondence with Carlyle, Sterling, S. G. Ward, and Thoreau. Occasionally Emerson spoke of this matter to me; but at a time when his memory for recent events was much impaired; and though I think he took an active and decisive part in suppressing the publication of the book, it is quite likely that he valued some parts of the manuscript, which came to me after his death, but with no comment from him.

consented, Channing took "copy" enough to make eighty pages in my reprint of his book in 1902, and sent it to be embodied in the midst of his first edition of 1873, — but without indicating which of the three walkers was the spokesman. I supplied the omission, partly by conjecture, and indexed the whole work in the second edition.

Although this capricious mode of treating his biographical subject confused the order of the book, and lessened its value, yet this volume of 1873, by the merit of its descriptions and the care with which selections were made from the then unknown pages of the Journals, has become the indispensable guide to all who would get to the secret of the charm which Thoreau exercises over a constantly increasing number, and a bettering quality of readers. For the careful, logical analysis of Thoreau's mental and moral qualities, no book is better or fairer than Mr. Salt's first of two biographies, published by Bentley at London in 1890.

Channing's pathetic description of his friend's last illness has often been quoted, and a few lines may be cited here: —

No man had a better unfinished life. His anticipations were vastly rich; more reading was to be done in

Shakespeare and the Bible; more choice apple-trees to be set in uncounted springs; for his chief principle was faith in all things, thoughts and times. He expected, as he said, to live for forty years. . . . With an unfaltering trust in God's mercies, and never deserted by his good genius, he most bravely and unsparingly passed down the inclined plane of a terrible malady, — working steadily at the completing of his papers, to his last hours, or so long as he could hold the pencil in his trembling fingers. He retired into his inner mind, — into that unknown, unconscious, profound world of existence, where he excelled; there he held inscrutable converse with just men made perfect, absorbed in himself.

From a different and nearer point of view,— though few were nearer than Channing, — his sister Sophia wrote, a month before his death:[1] —

Since the autumn he has been gradually failing, and is now the embodiment of weakness; still, he enjoys seeing his friends; and every bright hour he devotes to his manuscripts, which he is preparing for publication. For many weeks he has spoken only in a faint whisper. Henry accepts this dispensation with such childlike trust, and is so happy, that I feel as if he were being translated, rather than dying in the ordinary way of mortals. It was not possible to be sad in his presence. No shadow of gloom attaches to anything connected with my precious brother. His whole life impresses me as a grand miracle. I always thought him the most

[1] [Thoreau died May 6, 1862.]

upright man I ever knew; and now it is a pleasure to praise him.

With this conception and this memory of Henry Thoreau, it was with indignation that his family and friends read the misconceptions of him published by Lowell and others. Time has set them all aside, — as will be seen by citing them: —

> He was not by nature an observer; he had no power of generalization from outside of himself; he discovered nothing; neither his attention nor his genius was of the spontaneous kind; intellectual selfishness becomes almost painful in reading him. An itch of originality infects his thought and style. He confounded physical with spiritual remoteness from men. He had not a healthy mind; his whole life was a search for the doctor. He had no humor, and was a sorry logician. His shanty life was a mere impossibility. He was a skulker.

All this absurdity is Lowell's, with the exception of the last insult, which was the ignorant assumption of Stevenson.

Time and the verdict of mankind, "after some time be past," settle many questions about which men dispute. St. Augustine said, "*Securus judicat orbis terrarum*"; the round world has taken Thoreau's case in hand; and while his country-

men have printed or mean to print every word he wrote or said, if they can get a copy of it, he has been translated in bits into many foreign languages, and is an essential chapter in that practical-mystical philosophy miscalled Transcendentalism. Few writers have seen the invisible more clearly, or transcribed it more legibly into the language of common life. He was a student in Emerson's school, a brother to Emerson's thought; but never an imitator of him or of other men. The distinction between these two was justly stated by the elder brother, when Emerson said: —

> In reading Thoreau, I find the same thoughts, the same spirit that is in me; but he takes a step beyond, and illustrates by excellent images, that which I should have conveyed by a sleepy generalization. He has muscle, and ventures on and performs feats which I am forced to decline. 'T is as if I went into a gymnasium, and saw youths leap and climb and swing, with a force unapproachable, though their feats are only a continuation of my initial grapplings and jumps.

A point which is apt to be overlooked in portraying the Concord authors was yet an essential feature of their individual characters — their effect on each other by reason of their daily intercourse. It modified in each the otherwise too per-

sonal quality of his intellect; and when they were separated for a long interval, that good effect was in some degree lost. Emerson himself points out the effect Alcott had upon him when he says in his Journal of 1857: —

> Alcott is good as a lens, or mirror, — a beautiful susceptibility, every impression on which is to be accounted for, and until accounted for, registered as an addition to our catalogue of natural facts. It needs one acquainted with the lens by frequent use to make allowance for defects; but 't is the best instrument I ever met with.

What Emerson acquired thus from Alcott was more than Alcott derived from him; and it is quite possible that the same was as true of Thoreau and of Channing; for Emerson had greater powers of assimilation than these younger and more wilful friends. It was even more true in the relation between Emerson and Carlyle.

However he came by it, the reading world soon discovered for itself a forcible quality in Thoreau which could not have been learned from Emerson, because it did not exist even in that rich and varied intellect. His humor was not exactly Emerson's humor; his accuracy went beyond Emerson's; his curiosity and his patience went beyond Emerson's. His conception of beauty

was perhaps more profound, yet his taste was not so perfect; his relation to music, and, in a general way, to the objects of the five senses, was keener and more intimate: for he saw and heard and tasted, touched and smelt with a greater sensitiveness. Possibly this accounts for his more provoking censoriousness; for it was this defect that threw him so much and so early into opposition to the world of men around him. He needed more than most to remember that wise maxim, —

"Men should be taught as though you taught them not,
And things unknown proposed as things forgot."

Particularly he needed to act upon this hint in a community of which intolerance was a chief and profound characteristic. It was in excess even in the real urbanity of Thoreau's nature — a quality in which Emerson far excelled him. Will and affection — two qualities that, where they exist strongly, are wont to polarize each other, or else to double the force of each — reigned alternately in Thoreau's nature; and their interaction accounts for those pathetic seasons when he felt estranged from those few superior persons with whom he formed leagues of friendship. With all his philanthropy, and his acute sense of justice, he was apt to be exclusive; as when he said, "Nature meant kindly by us when she made our

brothers few." And he meant kindly by mankind when he did not expect them to come too near. He was not so great an admirer of Bacon as of Raleigh; yet what Bacon said of philanthropy must have pleased him, for he exemplified it in action: —

> I take Goodness in this sense — the affecting of the weal of men; which is that the Grecians call Philanthropia; and the word "humanity," as it is used, is a little too light to express it. Goodness I call the habit, and goodness of nature the inclination. This, of all virtues and dignities of the mind, is the greatest, being the character of the Deity: and without it man is a busy, mischievous, wretched thing, no better than a kind of vermin.

Having this quality, and being, indeed, a "universal lover of mankind," the human race found it out, and began to reciprocate in kind. They read him more and more, because they found that he cared for them too much to flatter them. Hence what I call his literary rebirth. When the critics, who are apt to fancy that literature exists by their patronage (a superstition as rife as anywhere in the Cambridge of the "North American Review"), thought they were giving Thoreau, at his death, his proper place, the rest of the world said to itself, "We will look into this;

there is something about this writer that seems to be attractive"; and they read him all the more for this dispraise. He is now probably more read by the unlearned, and more appreciated by the learned, than ever before. My purpose in this volume has been to show how he coöperated in his own posthumous fame; how he built himself up in literature from boyhood, and that without becoming a pedant, or trying to form a school, or even a class. Along with this conception of him may go likewise what I personally feel, that there was a religious and a moral element in his nature which awaits the future for its full development, as Channing intimates in one of his final pages: —

> Possibly the future may determine that our village life, unknown and unnoticed, without name and influence in the present, was essential and vital, — as were the realities he affected, the immutable truths he taught. Endowed with unusual force and sagacity, if he did not shine in public council, or lead the State, he yet defended the right, and was not the idle spectator of wrong and oppression. He showed that the private man can be a church and state and law unto himself. In a possible New England, he may stand for the type of coming men, who shall invent new forms and truer modes of mortal society.

It must have been of his vanished friend, too, that this poet was musing, when he wrote in his

colloquial poem "The Wanderer," of this rural Scholar: —

> "Be his the Good to teach, more than the Old;
> Revolving new society, new laws,
> Where'er the face of things smiles or grows sad,
> While far below, beyond, the sandy lake
> Bears her retreating skies, and clouds the earth, —
> The Scholar gleans, his faithful eye profound
> To read the secret in each thing he sees, —
> To love, if not to know."

There is an early poem of Thoreau's, without date, and which few of his friends had seen until after his death, when Sophia gave it to me, along with others, for printing in the "Boston Commonwealth" in the autumn of 1863. Upon showing it in print to Marston Watson, of Plymouth, who had married the "Maiden in the East" (Miss Mary Russell), he wrote me that it had been copied by her into a collection of verses made by her while she lived in Concord, or soon after, — he thought as early as 1843. If so, it must have had reference to his first residence with the Emerson family, and his leaving there before going to reside for a few months in the family of William Emerson at Staten Island, in the spring of 1843; to which he had never so intimate a relation as with the Emersons in Concord.

But it is a symbolical poem, like many that he

wrote, both finished and unfinished; and may well portray incidents in his whole Voyage of Life, viewed by him imaginatively as his wont ever was. I called it, when first giving it to the public, —

The Departure

I

In this roadstead I have ridden,
In this covert I have hidden:
Friendly thoughts were cliffs to me,
And I hid beneath their lee.

This true people took the stranger,
And warm-hearted house the ranger;
They received their roving guest,
And have fed him with the best;

Whatsoe'er the land afforded
To the stranger's wish accorded,
Shook the olive, stripped the vine,
And expressed the strengthening wine.

And by night they did spread o'er him
What by day they spread before him;
That good-will which was repast
Was his covering at last.

The stranger moored him to their pier
Without anxiety or fear:
By day he walked the sloping land, —
By night the gentle heavens he scanned.

II

When first his barque stood inland
To the coast of that far Finland,
Sweet-watered brooks came tumbling to the shore,
The weary mariner to restore.

And still he stayed from day to day, —
If he their kindness might repay:
But more and more
The sullen waves came rolling toward the shore.

And still the more the stranger waited,
The less his argosy was freighted;
And still the more he stayed,
The less his debt was paid.

III

So he unfurled his shrouded mast
To receive the fragrant blast, —
And that same refreshing gale
Which had wooed him to remain
Again and again
It was that filled his sail
And drove him to the Main.

All day the low-hung clouds
Dropped tears into the sea,
And the wind amid the shrouds
Sighed plaintively.

Let us accept these quaint stanzas now, with their haunting melody and their youthful sad-

ness, — so much at variance with his habitual good cheer and his sober beatitudes, — as his log-book of the Voyage of Life, reduced to one brief page. His sailing directions were copied in his own hand, and long since printed by his friend Emerson, thus: —

> Great God! I ask thee for no meaner pelf
> Than that I may not disappoint myself;
> That in my action I may soar as high
> As I can now discern with this clear eye;
>
> And next in value, which Thy kindness lends,
> That I may greatly disappoint my friends;
> Howe'er they think or hope that it may be,
> They may not dream how thou'st distinguished me;
>
> That my weak hand may equal my firm faith,
> And my life practice more than my tongue saith;
> That my low conduct may not show,
> Nor my relenting lines,
> That I Thy purpose did not know,
> Or overrated Thy designs.

And the final issue of that voyage cannot better be summed up than in the words spoken by Emerson over his coffin: —

His soul was made for the noblest society; he had in a short life exhausted the capabilities of this world; wherever there is knowledge, wherever there is virtue, wherever there is beauty, he will find a home.

THE END

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

A

LIBRARY OF HENRY D. THOREAU

THREE lists of his books seem to have been made out by Thoreau, — the first in 1836, the second in 1840, and the third from time to time, but completed late in his life, since it contains books only printed in 1860–61. As it stands in this *Index Rerum* it is wholly in his handwriting. His books were scattered at his death, many volumes being given to his friends and to the Town Library, at his selection; others were given away by Sophia, and a few sold at the small auction of her furniture, etc., as she was leaving Concord for Bangor about 1873–74. She died in October, 1876, and doubtless the books she carried to Bangor were there given away, or left at her death to her cousins Lowell and Thatcher. None remained in her house at Concord, in which I succeeded her, as her tenant, in the autumn of 1873; but Thoreau's Journals were there, until she had them removed to the Town Library in 1874, fearing that Ellery Channing would have access to them if they remained with me.

The second list is as follows: —

1840. LIST OF BOOKS BELONGING TO H. D. T.

(*Enlarged from one of* A.D. MDCCCXXXVI)

1. Byron's Works. New York edition by Halleck..... 1 v.
2. Coleridge, Shelley & Keats. Philad. ed..... 1 v.
3. Aikin's British Poets. Philad. ed..... 1 v.
4. Burns. London, diamond ed..... 2 v.

5. Fables &c. De La Fontaine. [French ?]..... 1 v.
6. Tasso's Gerusalemme Lib. Firenze ed..... 2 v.
7. Hoole's Ariosto. London ed..... 1 v.
8. Juvenalis et Persii Delphini. Philad. ed..... 1 v.
9. Ovid Delphini. Philad. ed..... 1 v.
10. Virgilii Delphini. Philad. ed..... 1 v.
11. Horatius, ex ed. J. C. Zeunii. Londini-Novo-Eboraci [London & N. Y.]..... 1 v.
12. Horatius, Cura B. A. Gould. Bostoniæ..... 1 v.
13. Homeri Ilias. Felton ed. Boston..... 1 v.
14. Dante. Avignone ed..... 3 v.
15. Dryden's Virgil. Philad. ed. [A "pony"?]..... 2 v.
16. Marmion. Baltimore ed..... 1 v.
17. Wordsworth's Poetical Works, ed. Henry Reed, Philad..... 1 v.
    [In a later hand] "New and Old."..... 1 v.
18. Virgilius. Londini, 1822..... 1 v.

[The next 14 titles in the later hand, not numbered.]

Milton's Poetical Works. [Boston edition probably.].. 3 v.
Pope's Works (2nd stolen)..... 5 v.
2 cops. Virgilii Delphini. [Probably Helen's copy.].... 1 v.
The Woodman and Other Poems. [Channing's, 1849.] 1 v.
Pindar, Anacreon, etc. [Probably from Greaves Library.]..... 1 v.
Orpheus. [Probably from Greaves Library.]..... 1 v.
Poetæ Minores Græci. [Probably from Greaves Library.]..... 1 v.
Emerson's Poems. [Edition of 1847.]..... 1 v.
Dante's Inferno, John Carlyle..... 1 v.
Airs of Palestine, Pierpont..... 1 v.
In Memoriam, Tennyson..... 1 v.
Prelude or &c. Wordsworth..... 1 v.
Poems of Ossian..... 1 v.
Wild Flowers, Rouquette. [Probably French-Canadian.] 1 v.

[Here the unnumbered volumes end for the present,—Channing's "Near Home" of 1858 being pencilled in, but effaced, because entered below.]

APPENDIX

DRAMA

[The word "Drama" is crossed out in pencil]

1. Shakespeare, ed. Stevens, Hartford..... 2 v.
2. Maria Stuart, Stuttgart und Tübingen ed. [German.] 1 v.
3. British Drama. Philad. ed..... 2 v.
4. Teatro Scelto Italiano. Cambrigia ed..... 1 v.
5. Medea, ed. C. Beck, Cambridge. [Seneca?]..... 1 v.
6. Sophocles' Tragœd. Lipsiæ ed..... 1 v.
7. Tasso. Ein Schauspiel von Goethe..... 1 v.
8. Euripides' Tragœdiæ. Lipsiæ ed., 4 vols in 1858..... 2 v.

[Here comes, in the later hand (pencil), after 1858.]

Poems by W. E. Channing. [Ed. 1843.]..... 1 v.
Poems by W. E. Channing, 2nd series. [1847.]..... 1 v.
Leaves of Grass. [1st ed., 1855.]..... 1 v.
Cowper's Task. [Perhaps given by D. Ricketson.].... 1 v.
The Music Master, etc. Allingham. [From Emerson?] 1 v.
Leaves of Grass, 2nd edition [1858.] [1 v., but not so entered.]
Near Home, by W. E. C.
Percy's Reliques..... 1 v.

[Here the later hand ceases again. In addition to the above Poems, Thoreau had a commonplace book, chiefly of poetry, 300 manuscript pages, copied in the Harvard College Library and at New York before 1844.]

HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

1. History of Concord [Shattuck's]..... 1 v.
2. History of Haverhill. By B. L. Mirick, Haverhill..... 1 v.

[This was Whittier's. Did Thoreau know it? Not in 1840.]

3. History of the United States..... 1 v.
4. Guthrie's Grammar. London ed. 1787..... 1 v.
5. Tytler's History. Concord, N.H., ed..... 1 v.
6. Indian Wars. By William Hubbard. Worcester ed... 1 v.
7. Cæsar's Commentarii. Lipsiæ ed..... 1 v.
8. Sewel's Hist. of the Quakers. Burlington, N.J. ed., 1774..... 1 v.

APPENDIX

9. New Hampshire Historical Collections..... 3 v.
10. Schiller's Dreyssigjäriger Krieg. Leipzig ed..... 2 v.
11. Winthrop's Journal. [Savage's edition.]..... 1 v.
12. Athens, its Rise and Fall. By E. L. Bulwer, New York..... 2 v.
13. Morse's Geography. Boston ed..... 1 v.
14. French Revolution. By T. Carlyle, Boston, 3 vols. in 2 v.
15. New England Gazetteer. By Hayward, Concord, N.H. 1 v.
16. Q. Curtius Rufus, Hist. Alex. Mag. Lipsiæ..... 1 v.
17. Hist. de Russie sous Pierre-le-Grand. Par Voltaire. Paris..... 2 v.
18. Rollin..... 4 v.

[In a later hand, without numbers.]

Finley's Atlas..... 1 v.
Hist. of the Old Township of Dunstable..... 1 v.

[This was G. J. Fox's book, bought at a door in Nashua, as related by Channing in his Life of Thoreau.]

Morse's Am. Gazetteer..... 1 v.
Froissart. Lond. Bohn. [Given to Channing.]..... 2 v.
Canadian Guide Book..... 1 v.
Church's History of King Philip's War..... 1 v.
Mineral Region of Lake Superior. [Cabot's?]..... 1 v.
La Decouverte des Sources du Mississippi..... 1 v.
Long's Classical Atlas..... 1 v.
Literature of Am. Local History..... 1 v.
Documentary Hist. of New York. [The earlier vols.] . 4 v.
Hist. of New Bedford. [By D. Ricketson.]..... 1 v.

[Now resumes the list of 1840, numbered.]

BIOGRAPHY

1. Hutchinson's Xenophon, Philad..... 1 v.

[This is not the whole of Xenophon, but only his dull novel, the Cyropædia in Greek and Latin, edited by Thomas Hutchinson, A.M. "Editio Prima Americana." Cura Johannis Watts, Philadelphiæ, 1806. Impressis Wm. Poyntrell et Soc.]

2. Life of Cowper. By Hayley. Boston..... 2 v.
3. Life of Newton. Fam. Lib. New York..... 1 v.

4. Life of Charlemagne. Fam. Lib. New York..... 1 v.
5. Life of George IV. Fam. Lib. New York..... 1 v.
6. Life of Cromwell. Fam. Lib. New York..... 2 v.
7. Franklin. By Himself. Salem..... 1 v.
8. Charles Douze. Par Voltaire. [Famous Charles XII.] 1 v.
9. Plutarch's Lives. New York. [Langhorne's translation cheap.]..... 1 v.
10. Life of Schiller. By Carlyle. New York..... 1 v.
11. Biographical Dictionary. J. L. Blake..... 1 v.

[In a later hand.]

Belknap's Am. Biography. 2nd vol..... 1 v.
John Churchman, Ac. of..... 1 v.
Hist. of the Ojibway Nation..... 1 v.
Life of John Brown. [Redpath's, 1860]..... 1 v.

[Thoreau was urged by Mrs. G. L. Stearns to write a better Life of Brown, but was so occupied with his Indian collections that he declined. He has contributed much to the later lives, as may be seen in his Journals.]

MATHEMATICS PURE AND MIXED

1. Mechanics. By Farrar. Cambridge. [Thoreau's Professor.]..... 1 v.
2. Optics. By Farrar. Cambridge..... 1 v.
3. Elec. Magnet and Elec. Magneticism. By Farrar. Cambridge..... 1 v.
4. Astronomy. By Farrar. Cambridge..... 1 v.
5. Grund's Geometry. [F. J. Grund, a German.]..... 1 v.
6. Euler's Algebra. Boston..... 1 v.
7. Logarithms. Boston..... 1 v.
8. Smyth's Algebra. Portland..... 1 v.
9. Emerson's Arithmetic, 3rd p't..... 1 v.
10. Key to 2nd and 3rd parts do..... 1 v.
11. Atkinson's Epitome of the Art of Navigation. London, 1758..... 1 v.

[This was probably a book belonging to the first John Thoreau in America, who was a seaman from Jersey, and sailed vessels, as well as privateered and traded in Boston. He died at Concord in 1801.]

[In a later hand.]

Legendre's Geometry ..... 1 v.
Davies' Surveying ..... 1 v.
Davies' Grammar of Arithmetic ..... 1 v.
Bache's Report on the Coast Survey ('51) ..... 1 v.
Bailey's Algebra ..... 1 v.
Colburn's Algebra ..... 1 v.
Report of Coast Survey for '52. 2 copies ..... 1 v.
Report of Coast Survey for '53, '50 & '54. '55, '56, '57, '58 3 v.

[In all five volumes of these Reports, sent him by his friend Loomis, who married Miss Wilder and is the father of Mrs. Todd of Amherst.]

Am. Ephemeris and Nautical Almanac ..... 1 v.
Sketches Ac. Coast Survey Rep. for '51 ..... 1 v.

[Both the last were sent by Mr. Loomis, then in the Nautical Almanac Office at Washington.]

PHILOSOPHY, METAPHYSICS, THEOLOGY

1. Paley's Philosophy, 2 vols. London — 1st v ..... 1 v.
2. Paley's Works. Philad ..... 1 v.
3. Stewart's Philosophy. Cambridge ..... 2 v.
4. Butler's Analogy. Cambridge ..... 1 v.
5. Locke on the Human Understanding. Philad ..... 1 v.
6. Whately's Logic. Cambridge ..... 1 v.
7. Whately's Rhetoric. Cambridge ..... 1 v.
8. Bible. New York ..... 1 v.
9. Greek Testament. Worcester? ..... 1 v.
10. Smellie's Philosophy ..... 1 v.
11. Emerson's Nature. [The rare first edition, of course.] Boston ..... 1 v.
12. Blair's Sermons. Boston ..... 2 v.
13. Zimmerman on Solitude. Albany ..... 1 v.
14. Abercrombie on the Intel. Powers. Fam. Lib. ..... 1 v.
15. Massillon's Sermons. Brooklyn. Tr. by Dickson ..... 2 v.

La Thébaide en Amerique ..... 1 v.
Spiritual Science ..... 1 v.
Bible, folio. Grandfather's ..... 1 v.

[Which Grandfather? Most likely Rev. Asa Dunbar, not John Thoreau.]

APPENDIX

PHILOLOGY

1. Ainsworth's Latin Dictionary, Abridged. Philad..... 1 v.
2. Latin Grammar. By Adam. N.Y..... 1 v.
3. Latin Grammar. By Gould..... 1 v.
4. German Dictionary. Philad..... 1 v.
5. German Reader. By Follen. Boston..... 1 v.
6. German Grammar. By Follen. Boston..... 1 v.
7. Pickering's Greek Lexicon. Boston..... 1 v.
8. Greek Grammar. By Buttmann. Boston..... 1 v.
9. Boyer's Dictionary [French]. Boston..... 1 v.
10. French Grammar. By Surault. Boston..... 1 v.
11. Gruglia's Dictionary. Boston..... 1 v.
12. Italian Grammar. By Bachi. Boston..... 1 v.
13. Spanish and English Dictionary. By Neuman..... 2 v.
14. Spanish Grammar. By Sales. Boston..... 1 v.
15. Spanish Grammar. By Bachi. Boston..... 1 v.
16. Bailey's Dictionary..... 1 v.
17. Johnson and Walker's Dictionary, Abridged. Boston.. 1 v.
18. Murray's Grammar. Hallowell. 2 copies..... 1 v.
19. Kirkham's Grammar. Baltimore..... 1 v.
20. Comprehensive Grammar &c. By Felch, Boston..... 1 v.

Goldsbury's Seq. to Com. School Grammar..... 1 v.
Significance of the Alphabet (Kraitsir)..... 1 v.
Webster's Dictionary, Unabridged..... 1 v.
Grammar of Arithmetic..... 1 v.
Roget's Thesaurus..... 1 v.
Bartlett, Dictionary of Americanisms..... 1 v.
Wright's Provincial Dictionary..... 2 v.
Oswald's Etymological Dictionary..... 1 v.
Andrew's Latin-English Lexicon..... 1 v.

MISCELLANEOUS

1. Curiosities of Lit. By D' Israeli. N. Y..... 1 v.
2. Ciceronis Orationes..... 1 v.
3. Grund's Chemistry. Boston..... 1 v.
4. Lord Bacon's Essays. Boston..... 1 v.
5. Télémaque. Besançon..... 1 v.
6. McLellan's Journal..... 1 v.

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7. Beauties of Chesterfield. Boston..... 1 v.
8. Hawes' Lectures. Hartford..... 1 v.
9. Ware on the Formation of the Christian Ch. Boston.. 1 v.
10. A Discourse by the Rev. David Clarkson. Lond. 1688.. 1 v.
11. The Universal Preceptor. Greenfield..... 1 v.
12. Gonzalve De Cordove. Par Florian. Paris..... 1 v.
13. Goldsmith's Miscellaneous Works. Philad..... 1 v.
14. Lempriere's Clas. Dict. New York..... 1 v.
15. Say's Political Economy. Philad..... 1 v.
16. Prose Italiane. By Bachi. Cambridge..... 1 v.
17. Iriarte. Moratin. Boston..... 1 v.
18. Cártas Marruécas y Poesias. Boston..... 1 v.
19. Foster's Essays on Decision of Character. Boston.... 1 v.
20. Story's Commentaries, Abridg. Boston..... 1 v.
21. Discourses, Reviews and Miscellanies. By W. E. Channing, Boston..... 1 v.
22. American First Class Book..... 1 v.
23. First Class Reader. By Emerson. Boston..... 1 v.
24. Introduction to the National Reader. Pierpont. Boston 1 v.
25. Beauties of Sterne..... 1 v.
26. Milton's Prose Works. Selected. Boston..... 2 v.
27. Carlyle's Miscellanies. Boston..... 4 v.
28. Tatler. 2nd vol. London, 1723..... 1 v.
29. Conversations on the Gospels, Boston. [Alcott's volumes.]..... 2 v.
30. Record of a School. [Miss Peabody's Report of Alcott's School.] Boston..... 1 v.
31. Goethe's Wilhelm Meister. Boston..... 5 v.
32. Günderode. (From the German.)..... 1 v.
33. Guizot's Essay on Washington..... 1 v.
34. New Views by Brownson [Orestes A.—friend of Thoreau then]..... 1 v.
35. Verplanck's Lit. and Hist. Discourses..... 1 v.
36. Spectator [Addison's]..... 1 v.
37. Report on Fishes, Reptiles, and Birds. [Of Massachusetts?]..... 1 v.
38. How to Observe. Miss Martineau..... 1 v.
39. Æsthetic Papers. [Miss Peabody's Collection of 1849.]. 1 v.
40. Emerson's Nature. [Probably a reprint]..... 1 v.

[In the above numbering 32 became blank by the

erasing of "Sixty Maps," to which that number was prefixed, — so that my numbers differ from Thoreau's. The old handwriting ceases with "Günderode," but the numbering runs on in pencil to Miss Martineau's book, No. 39. I carry it one farther. Thoreau met Harriet Martineau when she visited Emerson in Concord. Miss P.'s "Æsthetic Papers" contained Thoreau's "Resistance to Civil Government," — his first account of his night in the old Concord jail. When his mother heard of his arrest, she hastened to the jail, then to the Thoreau house in the Square, at which Misses Jane and Maria Thoreau then lived, and one of the latter, putting a shawl over her head, went to the jailer's door, and paid the tax and fees to Ellen Staples; her father the jailer being absent. So says Miss Jane Hosmer.]

Emerson's Nature, Addresses and Lectures [1849].... 1 v.
Emerson's Representative Men [1850]..... 1 v.
Emerson's Essays, 1st. Series [1841]..... 1 v.
Carlyle's Past and Present..... 1 v.
Hitchcock's Geology of Mass..... 1 v.
American Almanack. 1849..... 1 v.
Appleton's Railroad and Steamboat Companion..... 1 v.
Transactions of Agricultural Soc. Mass. 1847..... 1 v.
Dial [1840–41, 42, 43, 44]..... 4 v.
Scarlet Letter [cancelled; because given away?]..... 1 v.
Builder's Companion..... 1 v.
Reports on Herb. Plants & on Quad[rupeds] of Mass.. 1 v.
Ultima Thule. [T. Cholmondeley's book on New Zealand.]..... 1 v.
Oneota [a serial]..... 5 nos.
N.Y. State Cabinet of Nat. History..... 1 v.
Sterne's Sentimental Journey..... 1 v.
Documents Relating to N.E. Boundary..... 1 v.
Report on the Trees & Shrubs of Mass. [G. B. Emerson.]..... 1 v.
College Question..... 1 v.
Gray's Botany (Manual) '47..... 1 v.
Wilson's Am. Ornithology..... 1 v.
White's Selborne (Jesse). Bohn..... 1 v.

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Bechstein's Cage Birds and Sweet Warblers..... 1 v.
Lyon's Journal. [I think Capt. L., afterwards General.] 1 v.
Sitgreaves' Exped. Zuni & Colorado Rs..... 1 v.
Sickness on Emigrant Ships..... 1 v.
Exploration of Red River, Louisiana. Marcy..... 1 v.
Maps to do..... 1 v.
Exploration in Valley of the Amazon, P. 2..... 1 v.
Maps to last..... 1 v.
Penal Codes in Europe..... 1 v.
Compend, U.S. Census. [1860, I fancy.]..... 1 v.
Japan (Perry). [Expedition of Commodore Perry.]... 1 v.
Patent Office Report (Agriculture), '53..... 1 v.
Patent Office Report (Agriculture), '54..... 1 v.
VIth An. Report, Regents of Smithsonian Inst..... 1 v.
VIIth An. Report, Regents of Smithsonian Inst..... 1 v.
IXth An. Report, Regents of Smithsonian Inst..... 1 v.
Laman Blanchard's Sketches..... 2 v.
Dictionary of Quotations..... 1 v.
Business Man's Assistant..... 1 v.
Peter Gott. [This was a dull novel of Cape Ann, by Dr. Reynolds.]..... 1 v.
Gray's Manual of Botany, ed. '56. $2.00..... 1 v.
Gray's Text Book. .75..... 1 v.
Hunter's Narrative. $1.75..... 1 v.
McCulloh's Researches in America..... 1 v.
Carver's Travels..... 1 v.
Insect Architecture, Lib. Ent. Knowledge..... 1 v.
Insect Transformations, Lib. Ent. Knowledge..... 1 v.
Insect Miscellanies, Lib. Ent. Knowledge..... 2 v.
Macgillivray's Rapacious Birds..... 1 v.
Harlan's Fauna..... 1 v.
Journal of a Naturalist..... 1 v.
The Eggs of British Birds..... 1 v.
Quadrupeds of N. America, Audubon &c. Vol. 1st.... 1 v.
British Quadrupeds. Bell..... 1 v.
Harris's Treatise on Insects. [By the College Librarian.]..... 1 v.

[It was this Dr. Harris who said to Alcott, "If Emerson had not spoiled him, Thoreau would have made a good naturalist."]

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Cours d'Histoire Naturelle ..... 1 v.
Patent Office Report (Agriculture), '55 ..... 1 v.
McKenney's Memoirs & Travels, &c., &c. [About Indians.] ..... 2 v. in 1
Kirby and Spence's Entomology ..... 1 v.
Life of N. Am. Insects (Prov. ed.) ..... 1 v.
Fitch's Noxious Insects of N.Y. ..... 1 v.
Jackson's 2nd Report on Geology of Maine ..... 1 v.
Jackson's 3rd Report on Geology of Maine ..... 1 v.
Jackson's 2nd Report on Public Lands of Maine & Mass. 1 v.

[This was Dr. C. T. Jackson, Mrs. Emerson's brother, and the real discoverer of the anæsthetic properties of sulphuric ether, utilized by Morton.]

Patent Office Report for '56 ..... 1 v.
Agriculture of Mass. Flint on Grasses ..... 1 v.
Mineral Region of Lake Superior. [Also in History and Geography list.] ..... 1 v.
Principles of Geology, Agassiz & Gould ..... 1 v.
Buchanan's Sketches ..... 1 v.
Incidents in White Mountain History ..... 1 v.
Pike's Expedition. [Into Mexico, — Gen. Z. Pike, killed at York.] ..... 1 v.
Emerson's Essays, 2nd Series. [1845.] ..... 1 v.
Seaman's Friend ..... 1 v.
The Mountain, 1st part. [Uncompleted or not found.] 1 v.
A Manual of Coal and its Topography ..... 1 v.
The Life of N. American Insects (Harper's ed.) ..... 1 v.
Lovell's Complete Herball ..... 1 v.
A Plea for the Indians. By John Beeson ..... 1 v.
Zoölogical Notes. London ..... 1 v.
Corinthian Lodge, Concord. [Annals of the Masonic Lodge in Concord.] ..... 1 v.

[Thoreau's grandfather, Rev. Asa Dunbar, had been a Freemason, and the Master of a Lodge in Keene, New Hampshire, where he died in 1787, just before the birth of his youngest child, Mrs. Thoreau. In June, 1781, he delivered the customary sermon before Trinity Lodge of Lancaster, Massachusetts, which has twice been printed, — the last time in 1896, by Judge Smith of Clinton in his History of Old Trinity Lodge,

Clinton, Massachusetts. No Thoreau, so far as known, was a Mason.]

Travels in Peru. Tschudi	1 v.
Peruvian Antiquities	1 v.
Franchore's Narrative	1 v.
Indian Narratives	1 v.
Ancient Monasteries [in the Levant]. Curzon	1 v.
Rocky Mountains. Lewis & Clarke.	2 v.
Plinii Hist[oria Naturalis]. 3 vols. 1593. [Elder Pliny.]	3 v.
Discovery on the N.W. Coast of America	1 v.
Birds of Long Island	1 v.
Abbot's Scripture Nat. Hist	1 v.
Vegetable Kingdom, Handbook of Plants	1 v.
British Ferns	1 v.
Hist. of the Ojibway Nation. [Duplicate?]	1 v.
Patent Office Report for '57	1 v.
Patent Office Report for '58 (Mechanics)	3 v.
Echoes of Harper's Ferry. [By J. Redpath, 1860.]	1 v.
Loudon's Encyclopedia of Plants, $13.00	1 v.
Report on the Flowage of [Concord & Sudbury] Meadows, etc. [1861]	1 v.
Leaves from the Note-Book of a Naturalist	1 v.
Arctic Searching Expedition	1 v.
Pat. O. Reports, — Agriculture, '58 & '59, or now from '53–59 (inclusive)	7 v.
"The Mountain" by Jackson, 1860	1 v.
Harper's Ferry Report [of Mason's Senate Committee, 1860]	1 v.
Our Woodlands &c. W. S. Coleman	1 v.
British Butterflies, W. S. Coleman	1 v.
Popular British Conchology. Sowerby	1 v.
Popular Mineralogy. [Given to Ellen Emerson.]	1 v.
Popular Hist. Brit. Lichens. Lindsay	1 v.
Popular Hist. Brit. Mosses. Stark	1 v.
Popular Hist. of Mollusca. Roberts	1 v.
Gould's Report on the Invertebrate Animals of Massachusetts	1 v.
Pat. O. Report on Agriculture, '51	1 v.
New Mexico and California by Emory, &c. &c.	1 v.
Smithsonian Reports for '55 & '56	2 v.

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Herndon's Amazon, Part 1	1 v.
With maps separate	1 v.
Andrews' Report on the Colonial and Lake Trade	1 v.
And two copies of maps separate	2 v.
Foster and Whitney's Report, 1850	1 v.
Loudon's Arboretum et Fruticetum (15½ dolls.)	8 v.
Emerson's Conduct of Life	1 v.
Colorado Exploring Expedition. [In Sophia's hand.]	1 v.

This closes the catalogue of 395 volumes, with two or three duplicates. It had been accumulating for some thirty years in 1861, and includes many of his school and college textbooks, with others that he used as a teacher. A few had come down to him from ancestors; many had been given him, — notably those sent over from London in 1855, from T. Cholmondeley, — a list of which follows, not generally included in the above list: —

LIST OF BOOKS

(made up in one parcel) for Henry D. Thoreau Esq. enclosed by John Chapman to Messrs. Crosby, Nichols & Co., Boston, U.S.A.

Wilson's Rig Veda Sanhita, vols. 1 & 2. 8vo; Translation of Mandukya Upanishads, 2 v.; Nala Damyanta, by Milman, Rl. 8vo; Vishnu Purana by Wilson, 4to; Houghton's Institutes of Menu, 4to; Colebrooke's Two Treatises, 4to, bds.; Sankya Karika, 4to; Aphorisms of the Mimasma, 8vo.; do. do. of the Nayaya (4 books), 8vo; Lecture on the Vedanta, 8vo; Bhagavat Gheeta & translation, 2 vols. square 8vo; Wilson's "Theater of the Hindoos," 2 volumes, 8vo; Williams's Translation of "Sakoontala" or The Lost Ring, 4to, gilt. [This went to Mr. Alcott.]

Following the catalogue of the library of Thoreau was a sheet mainly in his handwriting, containing, shortly before his death in the spring of 1861, his designation of the friends who were to receive from his shelves books as souvenirs, — the list sometimes indicating what books. This is: —

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In Sophia's hand	*In Thoreau's hand*
Mr. [Edmund] Hosmer,	Plan of his Farm?
Mr. Alcott,	Four volumes
Mr. [Ellery] Channing,	Froissart's Chronicle
Mr. Sanborn,	Seven volumes of Bunsen
Judge Hoar,	[No books indicated]
Elizabeth Hoar,	[No books indicated]
Edward Hoar,	Grasses and Sedges
Town Library,	Mill's History of British India, 9 vols. & Coast Survey Reports
Natural History Society of Boston,	Herbarium, Birds and Eggs & Indian Relics
Mrs. Ripley,	[No books named]
Horace Mann, Jr.,	[Nothing named]
Edward Emerson,	Microscope
Mr. Blake,	[Nothing indicated]
Mr. Theo. Brown,	Percy's Reliques
Ellen Emerson,	Mineralogy [in Sophia's hand; also all the rest]
Ricketson,	[No indication]
Edith Emerson,	Conchology
Aunt Louisa Dunbar,	$50

Initials and figures in the lower margin show the number of volumes actually given, after Thoreau's death, thus: —

Mr. Emerson, 20 vols; Mr. Alcott, 4; Mr. Sanborn, 7; Mr. Channing, 2; Mr. Ricketson, 2; Ellen and Edith, 2; The Aunts, 2; P. [unknown], 1.

A small volume, *Index Rerum*, belonged in early 1836 to "D. H. Thoreau, Cambridge," as a mixture of commonplace book, journal, library catalogue, and special index to some manuscript hard to designate. The volume is wholly in Thoreau's hand and includes dates from March, 1836, to late in 1860 or even in 1861. It therefore shows the whole variation of his handwriting, from the rather unformed and flourishing script of his college days to the rapid and almost

illegible hand of 1860. The first pencil entries (pencil, accompanying a glove-sketch in ink) are titles of early manuscript Essays, as —

Merrimack and Musketaquid
Sound and Silence
Concord
Bravery
Friendship
Books and Style. Seeing
Obligation. Dying. Devil

Several of these were included in the *Week*, but not as a whole; this is true of "Friendship," portions of which the Bibliophiles afterwards printed. "Bravery" makes part of *The Service*.

A pencil index to some destroyed journal runs to page 245. It related to a book that existed in 1843, but perhaps was used up in writing the *Week*.

B

A LIST OF AUTHORS READ OR TO BE READ BY H. D. THOREAU

(See page 261)

Authors	*Works*	*Comments*
Orpheus.	Argonautica and other poems.	[The Pseudo-Orpheus.]
Homer.	Iliad, Odyssey, etc. H. N. Coleridge.	[Not the best texts.]
Hesiod.	Works & Days, Theogony, Shield of Hercules.	
Sappho.	Two Fragments, translated in Spectator by Phillips.	
Pindar.	Odes.	[Some versions by H. D. T.]
Æschylus.	Seven Tragedies.	[Two translated by H. D. T.]
Anacreon.	Odes.	[The ordinary Pseudo-Anacreon.]
Simonides.	Fragments, Inscriptions.	[Bacchylides not discovered then.]
Sophocles.	Seven Tragedies.	All the common ones.
Euripides.	Nineteen Plays.	Not all Tragedies.
Aristophanes.	Eleven Comedies.	
Callimachus.	Some Hymns on the gods. Epigrams.	One Elegy.
Bion.	Idyllia.	[Nothing but the common remains of both.]
Moschus.	Fragments.	
Theocritus.	30 Idyllia and some Epigrams.	
Herodotus.	History and Translations.	[Mostly in English.]
Thucydides.	" " "	" " "
Xenophon.	Anabasis, Cyropædia, Hellenica.	Memorabilia of Socrates and Apology.
Plato.	Dialogues and Letters.	[Nearly all, I judge.]
Aristotle.	Translated.	[Latin, English, French.]
Demosthenes.	The Orations, translated.	
Æschines.	" " "	
Archimedes.	*Passim.*	[In other authors here and there.]
	Latin Authors	
Plautus.	20 Comedies.	
Terence.	The Extant Plays.	
Cicero.	Opera omnia. Middleton's Life.	[Not in good modern editions.]
Cæsar.	Commentaries.	[Gaul, of course; others probably.]
Nepos.	Lives.	[Specifying Miltiades, Themistocles, Aristides, Alcibiades, Epaminondas, Phocion, Hannibal, Cato Major.]
Livy.	History, 25 Books.	
Seneca.	Treatises and Tragedies.	[No mention of S. Major.]
Epictetus.	Enchiridion.	
Josephus.	History of Jews and Jewish Antiquities.	[English of course.]
Lucretius.	Poem "De Rerum Natura."	
Catullus.	Epigrams.	[Probably all the verse.]

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Authors	*Works*	*Comments*
Ovid.	Metamorphoses, Fasti, 6 books of 12, Tristia, Elegies, etc.	[All but the Amores.]
Virgil.	Eclogues, Georg., Æneid.	[Probably the others.]
Horace.	Odes, Satires, Epistles, Ars Poet.	
Tibullus.	Poems.	[No mention of Propertius.]
Persius.	Satires.	[Essay on P. in "Dial."]
Juvenal.	Satires.	
Claudian.	Poems.	[Old Man of Verona, etc.]
Pliny.	Letters, etc.	[The two Plinys, doubtless.]
Tacitus.	Histories.	[Also Annals and Agricola, doubtless.]
Boethius.	Consolations of Philosophy.	
Augustine.	Confessions.	
Lucian.	Dialogues.	[Greek or English.]
Plutarch.	The Morals. Of the Lives: Lycurgus, Miltiades, Themistocles, Coriolanus, Aristides, Pericles, Cimon, Alcibiades, Epaminondas, Phocion, Alexander (Family Library), Catos, Pompey, and Aratus.	[But doubtless he read all.]
Confucius.		[In Stanley's Hist. of Philosophy he read, Thales, Anaximander and Plato, Æsopus (Fables), Anaximenes, Pythagoras (Golden Verses), Democritus, Anaxagoras, Socrates (Xenophon and Plato), Diogenes, Zeno, Xenocrates, Aristippus, Theophrastus.]

The authors and their works are in Thoreau's autograph; a few of the comments also; but most of those are my own. Several of these Greek authors were first read in copies bought by Mr. Alcott at London in 1842, or brought to Concord by Charles Lane from the Greaves Library at Alcott House in England. Stanley's History was in Emerson's library, and also the Confessions of Augustine.

C

ASA DUNBAR: PARSON, FREEMASON, AND ATTORNEY

This grandfather of Henry Thoreau graduated at Harvard in 1767, with forty-one classmates, among whom he was eminent and a hero of their rebellion. His grandson graduated in 1837, and so little had the college grown in the seventy years between, that his classmates numbered but forty-six, among whom Thoreau seems to have had little eminence.

Hardly had Dunbar completed his studies in divinity and begun to preach when trouble began for him more serious troubles than those of the college rebellion. He had wooed and won Mary Jones, the only daughter of Colonel Elisha Jones of Weston (she had eleven brothers then living), and they were married at her father's fine house in Weston, October 22, 1772, and soon went to live in his parish at Salem. But the dispute of the Colonies with George III was growing warm; and Colonel Jones (a man of estate, with two negro slaves), who had for ten years represented his town in the Provincial Assembly, took sides with the king. In January, 1774, Colonel Jones and such of his sons as remained in Weston, at a special town meeting had been able to prevent Weston from adopting Samuel Adams's plan for Committees of Correspondence and a Continental Congress; and Jones himself was chosen in May, as before, to represent the town in the Assembly called in Boston by General Gage, then Acting Governor of the Province. This was his last gleam of popularity; in September his patriotic

rival, Bradyll Smith, was chosen in his stead to sit in the Assembly that met in Salem; and late in 1774 Colonel Jones took up his abode in Boston, under the protection of the British troops. He was there in January, 1775, and in July was appointed, said the patriotic *Boston Gazette*, "overseer of Gage's haymakers upon Bunker Hill," a few weeks after the battle. That famous date (June 17, 1775) was well marked in the annals of the Jones family.[1] Mrs. Dunbar had come back from Salem to be housekeeper in the mansion at Weston, and on that day carried food (a basket of cherries, her daughter, Mrs. Thoreau, told me) to her brother, Dr. Jones, in the blockhouse jail at Concord; while her husband, setting out for Salem with another horse from Weston, found the country so disturbed by the battle going on in Charlestown that he had to return to Weston.

The style of Dunbar may be seen in the apology made by him at Weston, September 8, 1775, which was printed in the *Gazette* of Cambridge at the time: —

Having been acquainted by the gentlemen the Committee of Correspondence in Weston with some uneasiness arising in the minds of people, from the conduct of myself and family upon Fast Day, the 20th of last July; and having a desire to live in good fellowship with every friend to American liberty, I beg leave publicly to declare,

---

[1] The same *Gazette*, of August 7, has this to say of a younger Tory, then in Boston; "Dummer Rogers, Esq., late attorney at Littleton [Mass.], is appointed superintendent of Gage's grog-shops at Charlestown." This gentleman fled to England, like Governor Hutchinson, John Wentworth, Judge Curwen, and others; and late in the eighteenth century was of some service to the boy Byron, in his fragmentary education, and was affectionately remembered by the poet in after years. Jonas Jones, youngest brother of Mrs. Dunbar, being an officer in the British army, lived and died in England after the Revolution. Stephen, another brother, visited England in the interest of the family in 1778, and returned as cornet in Colonel Thompson's (Count Rumford's) King's American Dragoons, and fought against Marion in Carolina.

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That the part I bore in those transactions that gave offence was dictated solely by the principles of religion and humanity, with no design of displeasing any one; and that I am sorry that it was in the eyes of *one* of my fellow-countrymen attended with any disgusting circumstances. As it has been suspected that I despised the day, and the Authority that appointed it, I must, in justice to myself, and from the love of truth affirm, that I very highly respect and revere that authority; and were it not from the appearance of boasting, could add that I believe no person observed it with greater sincerity than

ASA DUNBAR

It must indeed have been a time of fasting, humiliation, and prayer to a pious minister at that time. Separated from his parishioners, who seem to have been fond of him, and from the family of his wife (who were in prison or in blockade, or dispersed about the land), under suspicion of treason, it was a period of anxiety and of doubt what a friend of American liberty ought to do and say. He seems in 1776 to have continued to preach at Salem, but to have fallen into ill health; and in 1779 to have withdrawn into Worcester county, and studied law with Joshua Atherton, who like himself was under suspicion of Toryism, but was afterwards Attorney-General of New Hampshire. Mr. Dunbar withdrew to Keene in that state, not far from his brother-in-law Daniel Jones, of Hinsdale, and practised law and Freemasonry there for years with general respect, but without acquiring much money. In the interval between Salem and Keene he delivered at Lancaster an address on Masonry, which has been reprinted of late years by the members of the Lodge before which it was given, and is probably the longest specimen of his style that now exists in print.

This Concord prison, in which in 1777 Sir Archibald Campbell was confined, though a prisoner of war, colonel of a regiment, and member of Parliament, was not a pleas-

ant residence, and Sir Archibald complained much about it to General Washington, who finally got him released, and exchanged for Colonel Ethan Allen, captured by the British in Canada. It was sketched by Sir Archibald's clerk, Wilson, and his drawing of it has long hung in the Concord Public Library. It stood on the main street in the midst of the village, near the oldest cemetery, and nearly opposite the present Library. The family tradition on these imprisonments, written down by Henry Thoreau in one of the Journals before 1846, since destroyed, was in some points incorrect.

The fine old house of Colonel Jones, where Rev. Asa Dunbar much resided in 1775, is still standing in good condition at Weston, but removed from the estate on which it stood to be the residence of Mr. Charles Fiske, the nephew of Mrs. Ripley of the Old Manse. The estate was confiscated in the Revolution, and sold by Massachusetts in 1788. It is now a part of the estate of the late General Charles Paine, a veteran of the Civil War, who sold the house to Mr. Fiske. In a meadow of this estate, some twenty years ago, Mr. Alfred Hosmer, of Concord, found the English cuckoo-plant, often mentioned by Shakespeare, growing wild, — apparently brought over for the Jones garden, but escaped, and growing wild, as in England. Mr. Hosmer brought it to Concord, where it now grows wild in several places.

In this mansion of the Joneses, Rev. A. Dunbar wrote and issued his explanation of his clerical conduct, which the Weston Committee (B. Pierce, Moderator) "receive as satisfactory, and think it ought to release him from any unfavorable suspicions that have arisen to his disadvantage."

D

THE BOSTON HOME OF THE THOREAUS IN PRINCE STREET

This was a house in Prince Street built and inhabited before 1738; for in that year (January 20) it was bought by David Orrok, mariner, of Nathaniel and Susanna Loring, for £118. It became the property of Sarah Orrok, the daughter of David and Sarah (Tillet) Orrok: this Sarah Orrok married a Scotch gentleman named Burns, probably about 1750. As she had been bred a Quaker, her granddaughter Maria Thoreau wrote me in 1878, "To gain the consent of her Quaker parents, Mr. Burns, my grandfather, was obliged to doff his rich apparel of gems and ruffles, and conform to the more simple garb of his Quaker bride." The house became the inheritance of Jane Burns, his daughter, whom John Thoreau, a mariner, married in 1781, when she was joint heir with her aunts, Ann and Hannah Orrok, whose rights were bought in 1795 by Jane's husband, — who at marriage was, like his wife, twenty-seven years old. She died in 1795, in this house, which then was the sole property of her husband and children, and at his death in 1801, it became the sole property of the eight children. In 1808, when John Thoreau, the eldest son, came of age, he mortgaged his eighth part to his stepmother Thoreau, for one thousand dollars, — showing that it was then valued at about ten thousand dollars. The mortgage was not recorded till 1811, when the father of Henry Thoreau was in financial difficulties; nor was it paid until about the date of Henry's birth, in the summer of 1817.

APPENDIX

The house then became the property of the other heirs, and, David and Sarah being dead, it was mortgaged by Elizabeth, Maria, and Jane to Isaac Dupee, in 1825; and again, in 1832, to the Fireman's Insurance Company, each time for one thousand dollars. This mortgage was not released till November 27, 1868, six years after the death of Henry. At that time the house was at least one hundred and thirty years old, and still a valuable piece of property, though perhaps worth less than it had been when Henry entered college in 1833.

E

THE JONES FAMILY AND THEIR PROPERTY

One of the fourteen sons of Colonel Elisha Jones, of Weston, grandfather of Cynthia Dunbar, the mother of Henry Thoreau, was Isaac Jones, of Adams, in western Massachusetts, near Pittsfield, where another son of Colonel Jones had an estate which was confiscated. Isaac was not one of the eight banished sons; but in 1823 he wrote the following account of the property and activities of his father and brothers, copying from Josiah. The first brother quoted in this document was the one first imprisoned in the Concord jail for aiding the enemy in Boston, Josiah Jones, who was bred a physician, but in Nova Scotia practised law, after his banishment. Being under oath, he testified as follows:—

He and his brothers Claim as Heirs to his Father who died in 1776. He died without a Will, leaving eleven Children. Nathan, the eldest Son, now living in Maine. Elisha, who died in Nova Scotia, leaving a Widow and children. Israel now living in Massachusetts. Daniel who lived in New Hampshire, now dead, having left a Widow and children. Elias in Massachusetts. Claimant Josiah in Nova Scotia. Ephraim now in Canada, who served in the British Army the whole War. Josiah who now appears and lives at Sisseboo. Simeon who lives in New Brunswick. Stephen who lives at Sisseboo. Jonas who lives in England. He left also one daughter married to Asa Dunbar who lives in New Hampshire.

Claimant says his Mother also is living and now lives in Massachusetts. His Father had a considerable landed Estate in Massachusetts. By his dying without a Will his Estate goes amongst all his children, two shares to the eldest son. His Mother has no Jointure, but is entitled to her Dower.

Says his Father Elisha Jones was a native of America. He had

always been a friend to British Government. Opposed all their Town meetings. Declared his sentiments openly. In 1775 he was Colonel of Militia and raised the Militia in order to oppose the violent measures of the Insurgents. He was obliged to keep a guard of Militia round his own House for fear of being attacked. His Life was in Danger which was the Reason that he kept this Guard. Before Hostilities began, the Mobs had come so often against him that he was obliged to leave home, and went to Boston in the Fall of 1774. Continued there to declare the same sentiments. Three of his sons were with him in Boston, and after the Battle of Lexington (they) served in the Militia under General Ruggles — Josiah and Stephen, two of the Claimants and Elisha who is dead.

His Father continued in the same Loyal Principles till his Death. General Gage always consulted him and placed the greatest confidence in him. He died in 1776.

The Claimant, Josiah, lived in New Hampshire when Troubles began. Always took the part of the Government. Left home on 19 April, 1775. Was obliged to go, as he was then so persecuted by Mobs, the whole Family having made themselves obnoxious by their Loyalty. Went to his Father at Boston. Continued under Protection of British Arms. Was sent to Nova Scotia by General Gage to procure Forage for the Army. In coming to this Province was taken Prisoner but made his escape, and in 1776 served in the Militia under General Ruggles. They consisted of Loyalists who were embodied at Boston. Served till Boston was evacuated. Went with the Army to Halifax, then to New York, having an employment in the Secretary's office under Captain Mackenzie. Continued in this employment till the year following then was employed in the office of the Inspector of Provisions, Francis Rush Clarke. Went with the Army to Philadelphia; afterwards employed in the Commissary's Line at New York. Was then in Governor Wentworth's Volunteers and served till the Fall 1782, then came to this Province.

The above examination was held by a Parliamentary Commission in Canada in 1786, preliminary to a grant of British money to the Jones survivors, for their losses in the Revolution by confiscation, and for services in the war. Josiah Jones (whose escape was from the Concord jail)

went on before the Commission to give a statement of his father's property, and that of some of the sons. Colonel Jones owned two thousand acres in the town of Adams, Massachusetts; six hundred and seventy-four acres in Pittsfield and Washington, Massachusetts; five thousand two hundred acres in Partridgefield; and smaller estates in the towns nearer Boston. His homestead estate in Weston, inherited from his father, was seventy-five acres, "all the land clear and improved, an elegant mansion house, and various outbuildings," the whole valued at one thousand pounds sterling. There were also three outlying farms, — Allen's Farm, of seventy acres in Weston, valued at three hundred and fifty pounds sterling; Jericho Farm, of forty-four acres, valued at one hundred and fifty pounds, "chiefly mowing land, fifteen miles from Boston"; and Nonsuch Farm, eighty-five acres, chiefly in Weston, Natick, and Sudbury.

This home estate consisted then of some two hundred acres, and was valued at about nineteen hundred pounds. In Princeton, near Mount Wachusett, was a farm of sixty acres, bought for Isaac, one of the colonel's sons, and in 1786 intended for Josiah, who had unfortunately been banished. He said that in 1786 his mother had made application for her thirds, but had received nothing; his brothers who were not banished (Nathan, Israel, Daniel, and Isaac) "have got nothing except what was given them by their father" before his death in January, 1776. They were in hopes of recovering some lands not included in the confiscations.

Here, then, were landed properties amounting in the aggregate to more than eight thousand two hundred acres, and probably worth, at the colonel's death, at least twelve thousand dollars, — or half as much as John Thoreau's estate was at his death in 1801, — yet mainly lost to the

heirs of Mrs. Dunbar, who, when left a second time a widow, by the death of Captain Minot, had little but her widow's thirds of the Minot estate to depend upon. Her son-in-law, the second John Thoreau, was farming those lands in Concord when his famous son was born.

Colonel Jones had a son Elisha, named for him, who received from his father a farm of one hundred and sixty-five acres in the present town of Adams, but was banished and lost it by confiscation. He died in Nova Scotia in January, 1783, leaving seven children, of whom the eldest was at St. John in 1786, being then twenty-one years old.

The Royal Commission reported in that year that the Joneses were a very meritorious family, and the report had been hastened in order to serve them as much as possible. Josiah, Simeon, Stephen, and the widow of Elisha received one hundred pounds each, and Stephen an extra hundred for expenses. He had joined the British army on the day of the Concord Fight, — meeting Earl Percy as he came to the aid of Colonel Smith, retreating from Concord. Stephen also carried to General Gage the first certain news of the numbers collecting, at Concord and elsewhere, to fight the British; whereupon Gage ordered another brigade to support Earl Percy. Evidently the Jones family did all they could in aid of King George.

F

LETTER OF Z. R. BROCKWAY

ELMIRA, N.Y., *January* 28, 1917.

RUMMAGING amongst my preserves, I find your letter of September 7, 1901, with its interesting enclosure, — your type-written copy of a Forensic by Henry Thoreau, at Harvard College, September 2, 1835, entitled "The Comparative Moral Policy of Severe and Mild Punishments."

Thoreau's philosophic insight, — college student of eighteen as he was, — as depicted in the first sentence and paragraph of the "Forensic," seems to me now unusual and remarkable, viz: —

"The end of all punishment is the welfare of the state, the good of the community at large; not the suffering of the individual. It matters not to the lawgiver what a man deserves, etc."

This shows that as early as 1835 this youth had emerged from the superstitious stage of civilization; from the orthodox theologic concept; though environed within the orthodox, New England intellectual atmosphere. Indeed, it suggests that, youth as he was, he had extricated himself from the next stage, the metaphysical one, with its fascinating maze of perplexities; whether wittingly or unwittingly, he was firmly planted within the advanced rationality of the Practical, as the true realm of governmental moral policy.

It has lately seemed to me that a failure to recognize the supreme demand of the public welfare over momentary sentimentality in the treatment of convicted offenders lies at the root of the common faultiness in that respect. Not to men-

tion other considerations, we are, by our foolish philanthropy towards the individual, breaking down a salutary public opinion that criminal behavior is disreputable and damaging to the offender.

The substitution, both in theory and practice, of *treatment* for *punishment* as the term to designate the consequence of crimes, is now much prevented by a reaction from the false orthodox conception of abstract universality, and the superficial infused notion of free will and responsibility, and certain punishments thus demanded. The demand of the public welfare to govern the kind and the degree of restraint and compulsion must replace the suggestions and systems that root in erroneous theological dogmas.

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